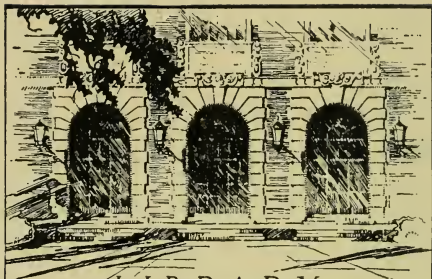






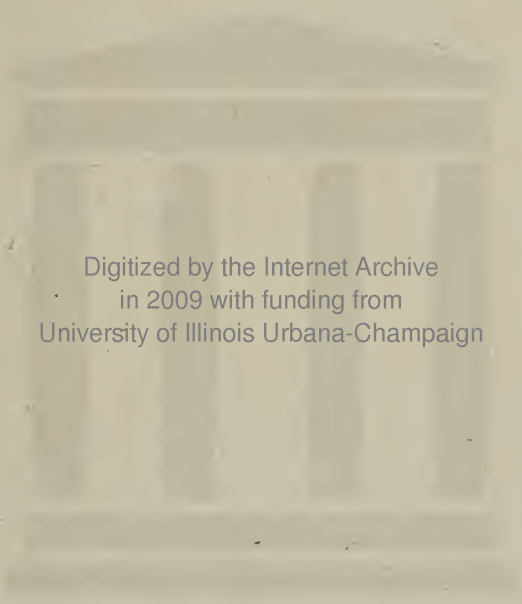
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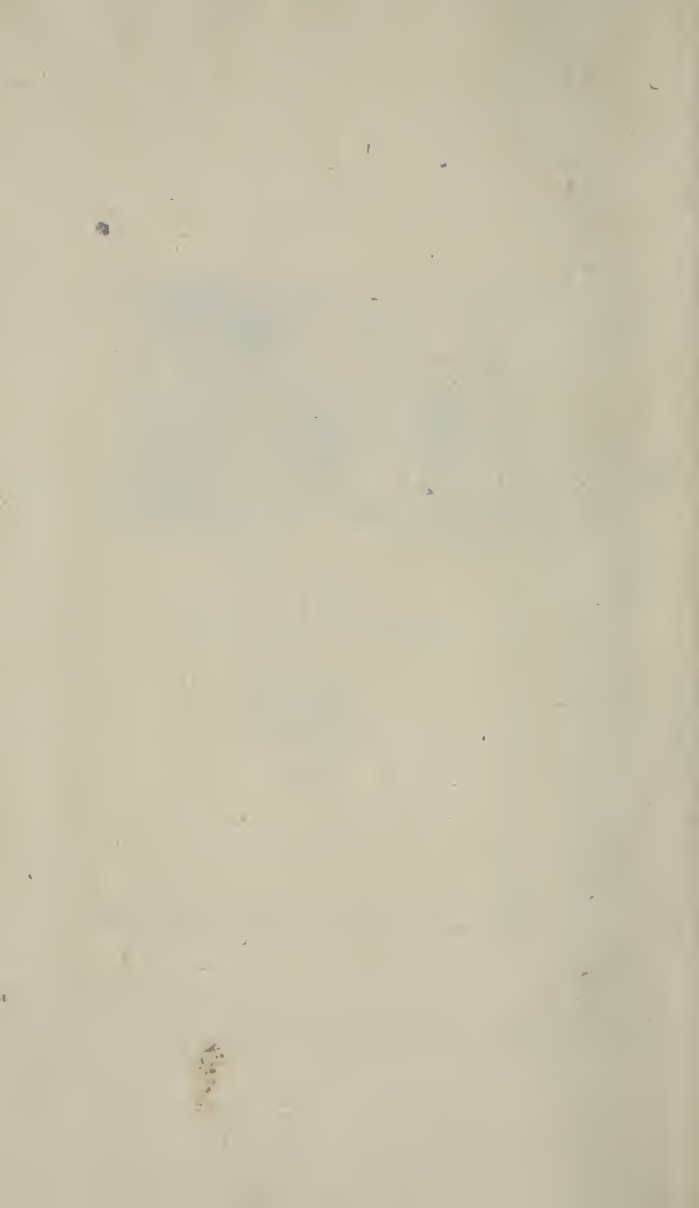


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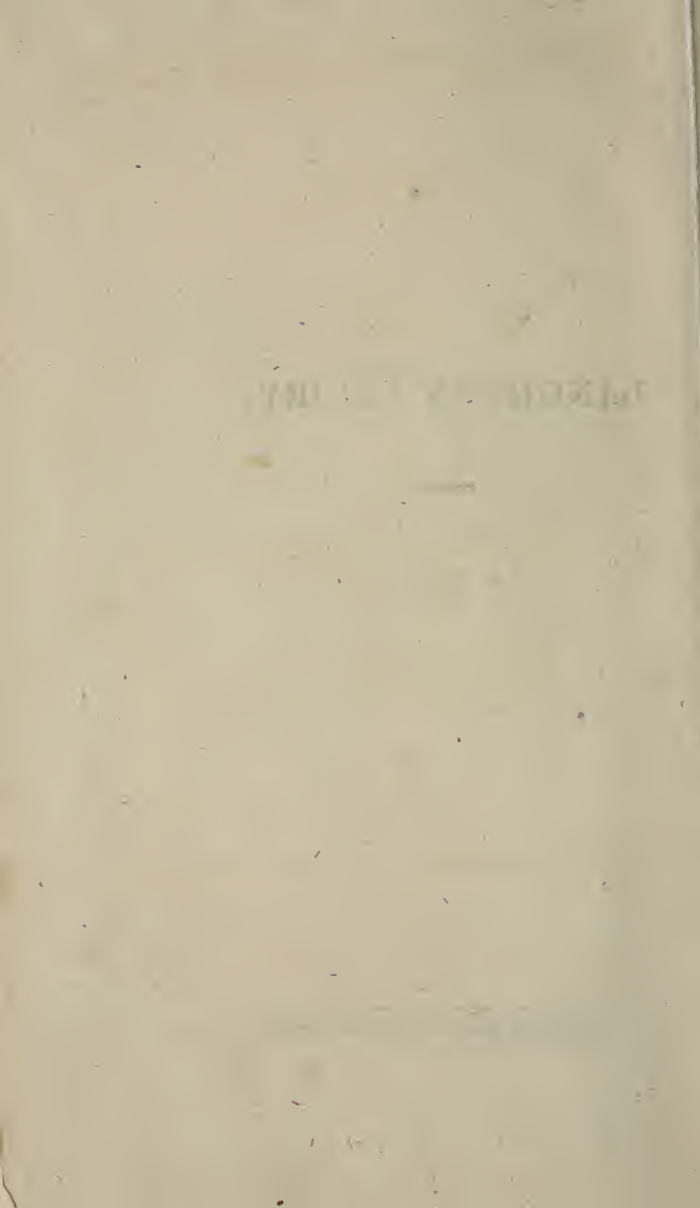


LANGHTON PRIORY.



A NOVEL.

Lane, Darling and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



LANGHTON PRIORY.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

GABRIELLI,

AUTHOR OF

MYSTERIOUS WIFE, MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND, &c. &c.

What though Religion's guardians taint her tide!
Pure is the fountain, though the stream flows wide!
Too oft her erring guides her cause betray:
Yet Rage grows impious when it bars her way.

VOL. II.

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LANGHTON PRIORY.

CHAP. I.

OUR hero found his bed very comfortable, and, spite of the rattling of the case-ment, was in a profound slumber, when the bell ringing for matins woke him. Hardly knowing where he was, he started up, and struck his watch; the hour accounted for the noise which had disturbed him, and, like Donald, he could not help thinking that Mr. Langhton was resolved every neighbour should know how devout he was. Having, however, once more composed himself to rest, he did not wake till his valet, according to order, appeared at

his bedside. The housemaid having very speedily relit the wood fire, she was no sooner departed than he very respectfully inquired—"How his Lordship had slept?"

"Never better, till the four o'clock bell disturbed me, and very well since."

"I am sure I thought it was an alarm of fire," said Donald, "and had just popped my head out of my door, when I caught sight of Mr. Belthorpe, who sleeps on this side of the house, and who told me what the bell was ringing for—hoping it would not disturb you. I was very sure it must have done so, but he passed on to church. Mr. Albany sleeps next room to him; Mr. Langhton and the ladies sleep in the other wing—so does Father Benedetto, and they all rise, I believe, to matins."

Our hero did not chuse to contradict him, as he was fearful of keeping this regular family waiting; therefore hurried over his toilette, and joined them in the oriel parlour, just as Mr. Langhton came in from mass, it being his general rule to remain.

remain at least a quarter of an hour at his private devotions, after the service was concluded, Father Benedetto usually bearing him company. He very politely greeted the young peer, and after the usual morning compliments, they all sat down to breakfast, as this was not a fast-day; and as soon as their meal was over, Mr. Langhton desired his grandson would walk over the house and grounds with his brother, as there was much to admire in both, adding—"We generally dine at half-past-one, my Lord; and, on account of the additional church service on holidays, we cannot very well deviate from our general rule to-day. To-morrow I shall request you would name your own hour."

The Marquis, as expected, intreated "he might conform in every respect to the accustomed rules of the family," leaving the room with his brother and Belthorpe; the former of whom told him he was afraid he would not derive much pleasure from

strolling over their old ramshackle habitation.

“ It will, at least, have novelty to recommend it to the Marquis,” resumed Belthorpe; “ and it certainly affords some fine specimens of Gothic architecture.”

Leading the way into the hall, formerly the refectory, he told our hero, who found much to admire in the painted windows, which commemorated the miracles of many Romish saints—

“ You were received last night, my Lord Marquis,” continued Belthorpe, “ in the locutorium, or parlatory; and we supped in the oriolum, or oriel chamber, where the former abbots, when this was a monastery, always took their repasts. Now let us proceed into the cloisters”—which Malcolm declared were worthy the inspection of the most curious antiquarian.

“ In the gate-house, or portal chambers, the portress resides,” proceeded *oracle* Belthorpe; “ and to the right, over the cloisters,

ters, is the ancient dormitory, now appropriated to the use of the menials; to the left is the lavatorium, or laundry, which is still used as such."

Having returned into the hall, Algernon led the way into the library, a long dark room, containing every work upon divinity which had been published by the fathers of the church, and a few authors of a more recent date.

"Mr. Langhton is not a great reader," said Belthorpe: "my pupil has a smaller, but more select collection of books, in a room above."

"Yes, these are more for shew than use," rejoined Langhton; "though here are some illuminated missals I should think it no sin to turn into cash, if they would fetch half what Belthorpe says. Protestants often give for such."

"You forget they are heir-looms, Mr. Albany: one of them was a present from King John to the holy Abbot, Reginald de
B 3 Langhton,

Langhton, and another is a gift of Pope Urban the first."

Our hero begged to be favoured with a sight of these precious relics; and as he agreed they were both rare and valuable, Algernon promised he should have his choice of them, as soon as they were at his disposal, if that ever occurred—

"Since, who knows, B." he went on, "whether the *Padre Benedetto* may not secure them to his share: for though he has renounced the pomps and vanities of this world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, he has a terrible hankering after money, or money's worth—has he not, B.?"

"You should not allow yourself such latitude of speech, Mr. Albany. The Father has many excellent qualities: his being a foreigner has rendered him rather unpopular among the household; but I can reverence even the errors of good men."

"Well, he shall be an angel, if you please,

please, Belthorpe; but thoughts are free, and I will swear you are the better man of the two, and much the least interested. However, as my brother may not relish the musty smell of these old mouldy manuscripts, let us proceed on our tour.”—Returning into the hall—“That door opposite leads to the kitchen, pantry, and larder; and as the former inhabitants of this pile loved good eating better than the present, the cook is not confined for want of room. So now let us mount aloft—to the left, if you please, brother—your room, at yon farther end, was formerly, and is still, the grand apartment; there is a long vellum scroll in the library, containing the names and portraits of all the great folks who slept in it while this was a monastery—you shall have that with the missal.”

“You are very obliging,” resumed the highly-amused Malcolm.

“That is the effigy of St. Basil over your door: your valet sleeps in this first room

—and here I court the drowsy god. How happy you are, brother, in not being obliged to attend our nocturnal duty! it may be very meritorious—but even Belthorpe allows it often goes against the grain.”

“Mr. Albany!” cried the tutor.

“My brother is a Protestant,” was the reply.

“Agreed; and I must acknowledge, Mr. Langhton keeps us in the strict performance of our duty; and as, from long habit, he is insensible of cold himself, he fancies we are equally able to bear the chilling damps of the chapel in winter nights.”

“I wonder he does not have it warmed by stoves,” rejoined Malcolm.

“Oh, there would be no merit, he would think,” exclaimed Algernon, “if we heard or said our prayers comfortably—we are never so truly devout, in his opinion, as when our teeth chatter in our head.”

The Marquis laughed very heartily at this definition of Mr. Langhton’s piety, while

while turning into his brother's room, which though large, was of small dimensions, when compared to the one he occupied ; it was also much worse furnished, as the bed was of green serge, and the chairs of walnut-tree, as was a small table ; in addition to which, there was a crucifix in a niche in the wall, and two figures of saints, an hour-glass, and a few religious books upon a deal shelf. Malcolm, of course, made no remarks, though Belthorpe said—“ Mr. Langhton is a great enemy to luxury,” opening a door into a second room of the same dimensions, fitted up as a library, in which there were globes, and some very good mathematical instruments—“ This is our study,” he continued ; “ here we are allowed a fire.”

“ And here we sometimes enjoy ourselves of a winter's evening,” hastily rejoined Langhton.

“ In reading some of the best authors in French and English,” gravely resumed the tutor.

Algernon's first unguarded speech rendered our hero rather incredulous respecting Belthorpe's assertion, though he made no comments; and they soon left the room.

"I sleep in the one next to Mr. Donald," said the tutor; "therefore now, with your Lordship's leave, we will adjourn to the chapel."

"Not yet, if you please, B. I am resolved my brother shall see grandfather's cell, and the *Padre's* vaults, as he calls it—they are safe in the scriptorium or confessional room, preparing for sexte—and I know the Marquis is not so strait-laced as some of our old foggrums."

"Well, well," said the complaisant tutor, "you must do as you please; but I dare not be a party concerned in exploring the sanctum sanctorums—so I will wait for you in the chapel."

Malcolm begged he might not trespass upon forbidden ground—though really very curious to see these said apartments;

he

he therefore suffered his brother to overrule his scruples, who first led him into Mr. Langhton's cell, as he justly termed it, as it was a very small room, which merely contained a stump-bedstead, upon which was a straw bed, and a very scanty portion of covers, a small table, upon which was a death's-head, an ivory crucifix, and an hour-glass; a diminutive looking-glass hung against the wall, and a sort of knotted whip was suspended in a remote corner, which Algernon took down, and having bestowed several gentle stripes upon himself, replaced it, telling his astonished brother—"The old gentleman thinks he can only get to Heaven by rendering himself miserable here below—and I am sure no poor sinner ever took more pains to do that—the *Padre* is not such a fool, I give you my honour; no more is B."

"But does not Mr. Langhton remove to a more commodious apartment when ill?" inquired one hero.

“ He has the constitution of a horse,” was the reply : “ I never knew him to be confined a day—but as for sleeping any where but in this *cheerful cell*, that he will never do, till he is carried out in his wooden surtout ; he generally dresses below, in a small room communicating with the chapel, and there he keeps his wardrobe. But it grows late, and I must give you a peep into the *vaults* where the Padre reposes—’tis in a turret adjoining the chapel, and was, in former times, appropriated to the use of indigent strangers ; there is a private staircase, which leads down into what was once called the porch, or outer parlatory, where pilgrims used to be received and confessed, before they were admitted into the chapel ; but as we admit no strangers within the walls, the outward door has been condemned long since——But come along, or we shall have my mother and Rosalie pop upon us, before you have seen the old fellow’s nest.”

Leading the Marquis into a sort of dark
lumber-

lumber-room, when having previously fastened the door, he made him get upon a bench, and then upon a chair affixed to it, desiring him to peep through a hole in the wall, by which means he obtained a very good view of the monk's sleeping-room, which appeared infinitely more comfortable than Mr. Langhton's; the bed stood in a recess, and had curtains, and there had evidently been a fire in the chimney that morning. His curiosity being, however, soon gratified, he descended from his elevated station, asking—"Whether the Father kept his door locked, since his brother had been obliged to have recourse to stratagem to give him a view of his apartment?"

"Safe bind, safe find, is the Padre's maxim: an old Italian servant came over with him, and who sleeps in an adjoining closet, is the only one ever permitted to enter his room—and for very good reasons, I am of opinion. Belthorpe and I, however, made that hole on purpose to gratify

tify our curiosity; and once we did see him counting his hoards, which he secures in that great chest to the right of his bed. Aye, aye, let him alone, he is a deep one, I promise you—and he makes no scruple of indulging in tit-bits, after the family are retired, particularly on fast-days; he confesses the cook-maid—and he takes care to keep the cold out with some of grandfather's best wine, since all the servants are more or less under his thumb; and, as he winks at their following his example, they will never peach. Indeed, to be very honest—but mum's the word, you know—Belthorpe and I are fain to make ourselves amends, now and then, for our forced fasts—for there never was so strict a man as grandfather; he ought to have been a monk of La Trappe, as B. says; since no man of a liberal mind would sanction or conform to the rigid rules he enforces among his household. Therefore, do not judge of Catholics, in general, from the sample you have had, as some are very
good

good sort of people—if Belthorpe is to be believed. However, God send I had once turned my back upon this gloomy prison, I should not be in haste to return hither—indeed, B. says 'tis almost unique of its kind, as it has been kept in such good repair; it is the finest specimen of Gothic architecture, and of conventual gloom, to be met with in England; for every thing remains nearly in the same state as when Harry the Eighth seized the revenues, and turned the monks adrift; and almost every other monastery is gone to rack and ruin. But you have not seen the chapel, and 'tis half-past-eleven—we will only walk round it.”

Returning once more into the hall, and leading the way down the arched passage, with which the sitting-rooms communicated, at the extremity of which was a pair of folding-doors, that opened into the chapel, where Malcolm found much to admire, as the painted windows were still
in

in excellent repair, and represented many of the most prominent miracles performed by our Saviour and his disciples; a double row of light Gothic pillars supported the fretted roof, a fine organ was in a loft facing the great altar, which was most sumptuously decorated, it being a holiday, and a very fine picture of the Ascension hung over it. Algernon next pointed out the tomb of the last abbot, which Malcolm thought rather disfigured the holy pile; and many marble tablets encrusted in the walls, sacred to the memory of the Benedict, Dominic, and Eusebius Langhtons, and their dames, whose bones reposed in the vault or crypt beneath. In a small recess was a figure of the Virgin, beyond which was a Gothic door, which was never opened, Algernon said—"It leads into the bye road, which runs down that side of the house; formerly the great folks in the neighbourhood used to come in to prayers that way, as it admitted them into the interior

terior of the church: the peasants and pilgrims came in through that door under the organ-loft."

Walking towards it, it opened into an octagon Gothic vestibule.

"The Padre's *vaulta*," he went on, "is over this room—that winding staircase goes up to it; the folding-doors on that side, which have long been walled up, were formerly always open for the admission of pilgrims and travellers; but no strangers ever now come to their devotions here, if I except a French lady and her daughter, whom the revolution have driven from France, and who came recommended to Father Benedetto. They reside in a cottage about two miles from hence, belonging to my grandfather, which he fitted up for them, and where they lead but a dull life; though they were fortunate enough to secure some of their valuables when they made their escape, and they had transmitted some money, previously, to England—so they make shift to keep the
wolf

wolf from the door. But, before you leave the chapel, you must see one of our greatest boasts—a copy of the celebrated statue of St. Bartholomew, which is in the cathedral at Milan”—leading Malcolm towards a niche in which it stood *—“There,” said he, “grandfather would expatiate for an hour upon the sash-like grace and curious folds of the skin.”

“And I should be tempted to reply, as an Englishman did before me,” rejoined Malcolm, “when surveying the original at Milan—

‘How’er your saints may be the winners,
Let me wear mine like other sinners.’

“But I am satisfied, for much as I admire the skill of the artist, the representation makes me shudder.”

* This saint, having been flayed alive, has given the artist a fine opportunity to shew his skill in anatomy: the muscles are represented with great accuracy, and the skin is thrown loosely across the shoulder, like a sash.

“I only

"I only wish B. had heard your remark, for we all participate in your dislike of the horrid representation. But the bell will soon ring for sexte."

"Then I will go to my toilette," said the Marquis, "while you go to your devotions—and can assure you that I have been much gratified by my ramble."

Leaving the chapel with his brother, who whispered, as they separated at the foot of the great staircase—"Not a word of the cell, or *vaults*: expatiate as much as you please upon all the other wonders."

"What a strange compound of levity, superstition, and hypocrisy, is this said brother of mine!" thought the Marquis, while he nodded an assent to his caution.

Donald was in his master's room, preparing his toilette, which induced him to remark, that Mr. Langhton dined when fashionable folks went to breakfast; adding—"I could not have believed, my Lord, there had been a family regulated as this is, to have been met with in England—as I am
very

very sure there were no such rigid Catholics, even in Italy, previous to the French revolution."

Our hero had participated in Donald's astonishment, not having believed that Mr. Langhton was the bigot report had represented him; but he was now convinced that fame had barely done him justice. Well might he live secluded, even in his native country, he thought; since he frequently denied himself common necessities, and led so strange a life, that he was half tempted to think him insane—and such gloomy fanaticism is certainly more or less a species of madness, and very inimical to the comforts and morals of those who dwell within its influence.

His reflections were interrupted by a servant knocking at his door, with a note from Lord Algernon, whose groom waited for an answer. The Earl wrote in excellent spirits, observing that Henry was not more anxious to explore the Priory, than the Countess and Lady Winifred were to see

see the Marquis of Endermay; the latter of whom hoped he would spend at least a fortnight with her, before he left Lancashire; nor was Lady William Albany forgotten, as he commissioned our hero to deliver a very kind message to her, and to assure her that he should take an early opportunity of paying his compliments to her in person.

Malcolm instantly answered this kind epistle; promising to ride over, the next morning, to pay his respects at Highwood, and explaining why Lady William did not send any message in return, since he dare not disturb her at her devotions; but she had desired him, the overnight, to hint that her late estrangement from his father's family had not originated in choice—entering into a few details which he knew would be interesting to his uncle, but which he was obliged to cut very short, in consequence of Mr. Langhton's early hours.

Donald carried his answer down to the
groom,

groom, who had remained at the lodge, and whom he sent to the Nag's-head to refresh himself before he returned home. And our hero having completed his toilette, (he had left off his mourning before he quitted Scotland), he descended into the *locutorium*, as Mr. Belthorpe styled it, where he found the whole family, who were just returned from chapel.

Mr. Langhton was extremely flattered by the remarks he made upon his habitation, as they convinced him that he was a judge of the real beauties of the edifice; and he now informed him whose portraits decorated the saloon—as our hero had supposed, they were, all dignitaries of the church, related to the Langhton family, or bearing that name; and they claimed affinity to many Italian nobles, who had worn the purple, and been distinguished by a mitre. The portrait that resembled Mr. Langhton had been painted at Rome for his father, during his residence among the Jesuits.

“ In

“In the oriel parlour,” added the old gentleman, “are the portraits of my grandfather, father, and brother; but they were done in England, and not by a first-rate artist—therefore are merely valuable, as bearing some resemblance to such near relations. We think Algernon very like his deceased uncle. Your Lordship is, I understand, extremely like your mother.”

“He is, indeed,” said Lady William; “for I have seen a miniature picture of Lady Zera Montrose; but I think he has his father’s features, and the general expression of his countenance.”

A summons to dinner broke in upon the conversation; and our hero was convinced that on holidays the family were made ample amends for the fasts which preceded them, as a very sumptuous repast smoked upon the board, served in silver—to convince the young peer that the Langhtons could, upon occasion, vie with the Endermay and Derwent families, in point of
5 magnificence,

magnificence, if not in point of modern taste and elegance; and after doing ample justice to the dessert, the family again returned to chapel.

Malcolm seized the opportunity to write to Dr. Campbell, and had but just finished his epistle, when his hosts joined him; and out of compliment to him, Lady William and her children were excused from attending vespers. Her Ladyship seized the opportunity to convince him that her daughter, though educated in retirement, had not made a very bad use of her time, as she drew her out sufficiently to enable him to ascertain that she was well versed in the history of her own country, and by no means ignorant of geography—the discourse having turned upon Egypt, the battle of the Nile, and that of Aboukir, in which he had taken so active a part.

“If you were a Catholic, brother,” said the much less polished Langhton, “you might hear Rose play the organ, which she frequently

frequently does during vespers. Belthorpe was her master, and he supplies her place when she is excused duty."

"And do you never touch any other instrument, my dear Rosalie?" asked the Marquis.

"She has a very good piano-forte in my dressing-room," said Lady William; "but I fear she will fall very short of the lady performers you have had an opportunity of hearing, my Lord; but if you are inclined to judge for yourself, we will adjourn thither."

Malcolm thanked her Ladyship for such a proof of her regard, readily following her up-stairs, and into one of the most comfortable apartments he had yet seen in the Priory, which was hung round with pieces of embroidery and drawings, done by the two ladies, which were far above mediocrity; and if Rosalie was not a first-rate musician, she was a very pleasing performer, and sung some of Handel's compositions with great taste—her elder

brother's judicious compliments proving so encouraging, that she even surpassed her mother's expectations, who reluctantly reminded them that the more devout part of the family would soon return from chapel; and gladly would our hero have been excused from again joining them; but as that was impossible, he politely listened to various prolix stories respecting the former abbots of the mansion, with which Mr. Langhton chose to entertain him; and to a very fabulous legend respecting the original founder, which the old man seem to believe most implicitly.

The various monastic orders were next discussed; and though Mr. Langhton had much to say in praise even of the gloomy devotees of La Trappe, he gave the decided preference to the disciples of Ignatius Loyola, affirming that Clement the Fourteenth, by abolishing so useful an order, had lain the foundation of the French revolution; since the deistical writings of Voltaire, and his heretical followers, Diderot,

derot, D'Alembert, and Condorcet, would never have been tolerated by those pious brethren; and as they were considered as the best instructors of youth, the rising generation of the French would not have become so abandoned a race of men, had they been suffered to remain in their cloisters, as the generality of them must, more or less, have been educated by those holy fathers.

Malcolm thought there was some truth, mingled with a great deal of romance and superstition, in his reasoning, and agreed, that the abolition of the Jesuits had certainly shaken the Papal authority.

“Forgive me, my Lord,” exclaimed Father Benedetto; “but I must grieve that you are a dissenter from the mother church, since few Catholics could draw juster conclusions than you have done.”

“Our creed is more indulgent than yours, Father,” was the reply; and as the clock was striking ten, he chose to retire when the master of the house did; Lady

William having hinted, during the evening, that her father was naturally rather jealous, and that he might feel hurt at his preferring her company to his; and very possibly the monk might affect to dread they should discuss religious topics, since he must be convinced that his Lordship could argue very ably upon every subject. And Malcolm was convinced she had judged rightly, since the friar seemed pleased, when he found he did not wish to keep the ladies up after their accustomed hour; kindly comprising him in the general blessing, and assuring him that he should constantly remember him in his prayers. Malcolm slightly bowed his thanks for this proof of his regard, and having paid the usual compliments to all present, sought his apartment.

CHAP. II.

DONALD was in waiting in his room, as the servants all retired at an early hour; and not to keep the housemaid from mass, he had promised to set light to a faggot she had given him, when his Lordship rose. Malcolm approved of the notion, not wishing to break in upon the family devotions.

“Why, they had need to pray, my Lord,” resumed the valet; “for I am afraid they are a very bad set. As for old Ashton, he is an absolute drunkard, and at the beck and call of the Father and Mr. Belthorpe, who wink at his failings, as he enables them to indulge their own propensity to
c 3 drinking.

drinking. In short, none of the household are restrained from doing wrong, from any sense of duty or gratitude towards their masters, as they can all procure absolution, by conniving, and assisting to defraud Mr. Langhton. Lady William and Miss Albany are angels upon earth, I do believe, since all the servants join in their praise; and, what is more, they fear them, as much as they love them—such is the ascendancy of virtue, even among such a crew. As for the young Squire, as they call him, he is hail fellow with them all; therefore I cannot say he is much more respected than the old gentleman, whom they style Father Basil, when in their cups, and declare that the Italian might make him stand upon his head in the church, by way of penance, if he took it into his fancy; for he can only see, hear, speak, and act, as he directs. Master Ashton was pretty communicative this evening, having, out of politeness to me, drank an extra bottle, of which he took his full share——But pray, my Lord,

were

were you in the porch chamber adjoining the chapel, when you walked over the house this morning?"

"I was: why do you inquire? What has that to do with Ashton's being in liquor."

"I hope your Lordship will not think me too presuming; but you must have heard, that when people are so, they frequently blunder out with what they do not intend."

"But too often—so pray tell me what mighty secret Ashton has disclosed, now he is in his cups."

"He has merely excited my curiosity, my Lord—though I have heard of such cruelties having been perpetrated by monks abroad, that I own I am inclined to believe them capable of any atrocity. Father Benedetto is an Italian, and they are the most treacherous of all nations. But as your Lordship has been in the porch chamber, pray did you go up into his room, which is over it?"

"My brother informed me no one was

ever admitted into his apartment, his own servant excepted."

"So said Ashton, which makes me put some faith in the hints he dropped. But not to keep your Lordship in suspense—as you have been in the porch chamber, you know the situation of that and the friar's room, which is directly over it—indeed, there is a flight of stairs which leads down from the one to the other."

"I know there is: what of them?"

"Why then, my Lord, there is a third room in this said turret, which runs over the friar's, and which once had windows to the road on one side, and to the garden on the other, as the monk's still has; but some years ago these were all walled up, by the Padre's orders; and this upper room is now only lit by a skylight, which no one can look down, as the turret walls have been both heightened and spiked; and there is no communication with this well-secured apartment but through the friar's room, as in an adjoining closet there is a
staircase

staircase leading up to it, similar to the one below. Now, as Ashton observes, there must have been some very cogent reason for Mr. Langhton's having put himself to such an expence, as it cannot have been merely to gratify a whim of the friar's; besides, why was an apartment in so elevated a situation so secured by iron-work?—What thieves would ever think of breaking into the house from the roof? However, one of these days I am to be gratified with a sight of the walls which enclose this mysterious room, as there is a trap-door in the lumber-room, which goes out upon the leads, very near the turret. When I have seen how it is secured, I shall be better able to describe it to your Lordship; for, as Ashton says, what use can the old man make of this said room, as his money would be as safe in his own? but, positively, he thinks there is some one, of what sex he does not pretend to say, concealed there; for very soon after it was thus, in a manner, rendered inaccessible,

the Padre's servant quarrelled with all those in the house, and has absolutely refused to eat, drink, or associate with them since; and as the friar is all-powerful, he easily found excuses for his caprice, declaring that, as a punishment for his contumacy, he should henceforth eat his meals alone and in his own apartment; and as the cook, who is all in all with the monk, never stints him, Ashton thinks he ought to do more credit to his keep, for he makes away with more than would serve two moderate people. Therefore, surely, my Lord, one may be tempted, like Ashton, to surmise that the upper room is inhabited, as well as the lower one."

"Why, altogether, 'tis a strange story," resumed Malcolm; "yet Mr. Langhton must be in the secret, I should suppose; as he must have known of the alterations you mention."

"Oh, he gave the orders himself to the workmen, my Lord, who were told this mysterious attic was to be used as an observatory;

servatory ; and a fine large telescope was sent for from London, to enable the monk to watch the motions of the moon and stars. But Ashton declares the old Italian is too cunning for his priest-ridden master, who thinks he has the whole house safe under lock and key, when the great gates are closed ; whereas, it has been ascertained that somebody, either the Father or his servant, have often gone out, and, of course, come in, through the little Gothic door in the church, though the key has hung for years in Mr. Langhton's room, and it is supposed it is never opened. But Ashton has been too many for the friar, since a little fine sand, or a pin, placed upon the lock, and now and then a cobweb over the keyhole, has enabled him to judge that some one does now and then make their exit and entree thus privately ; of course, the inhabitant of the attic was smuggled in that way—and if the old Italian was inclined to introduce robbers,

who could hinder him? I vow, if I was Mr. Langhton, I should not sleep easy in my bed. Ashton did not mean, at first, to be so communicative; but I drew him on, as I promised never to mention what he told me without the walls, and I have not forfeited my word—though I certainly did not give him reason to suppose that I should discuss the matter within the holy precincts; but I thought it my duty to communicate what he said, to your Lordship—not that it matters to you whether the old fellow keeps a mistress, yet I wish that could be ascertained.”

“ That may prove a difficult task, Donald—but, for the present, good night. As your having remained so long with me may have excited surprise, though I do not think you have been overheard, take no notice to Ashton in the morning; since, should you appear curious, you will defeat your own purpose. Chance may befriend you during our stay; but, as you value my
regard,

regard, take no steps likely to excite suspicions in the Father's bosom—and do not forget to call me as usual.”

The valet bowed and retired, leaving his master more perplexed than he would have chosen to have acknowledged. Had this said attic merely been used as an observatory, thought our hero, why need it have been thus secured? and why had not his brother, who was so anxious to shew him the Padre's vaults, avoided mentioning the mysterious apartment over it? He had certainly hinted that the friar had his secrets; and perhaps, like Ashton, he merely suspected that there was a female above; still it was extraordinary he had not mentioned his suspicions, or that curiosity had not induced him to explore this forbidden apartment; perhaps he was sworn to secrecy—but then he must be in the monk's confidence, and that seemed very unlikely, when it occurred to him, that he and Belthorpe had certainly made the opening he had peeped through, with a view to discover

cover who the monk had concealed above; and possibly they might never have been able to obtain a glimpse of the prisoner. Then again he reflected, that possibly the lady, or gentleman, who thus cheered the Father's solitude, might not always inhabit the Priory, since the monk could go out and in when he pleased; but what story could he have told Mr. Langhton, likely to induce him to come into his plans? He resolved, however, to be more *au fait* of this mysterious business before he quitted the Priory, as he knew Donald would undertake even impossibilities to oblige him; and as a preliminary step, he resolved to take a minute survey of this mysterious turret from the garden; and, if possible, to draw his brother into conversation respecting it.

These reflections had so broke his rest, during the fore part of the night, that he was in a sound sleep when the martin-bell roused the household to prayers, and never woke till Donald, having lit
the

the fire, thought it necessary to call him. He renewed his cautions to the valet, while dressing, adding, with an encouraging smile—"I will devote a short time to reflection, before I endeavour to explore this mystery; though, I dare say, Ashton is right in his conjectures, if, as he supposes, the turret chamber is inhabited—but appear to have forgotten the circumstance, as he will doubtless be very much upon his guard to-day."

Donald promised obedience, and the Marquis joined the family at breakfast; which was no sooner over than he ordered his horses, telling Mr. Langhton that he should ride to Highwood, as Lady Winifred might fancy herself slighted, were he to delay paying his respects to her.

"Your Lordship will return to dinner, I hope," was the reply, as the old gentleman felt an involuntary degree of regard and respect for this youthful defender of his country; and considering he was a Protestant,

testant, it was truly extraordinary—nay, even Father Benedetto felt something like esteem for him; and had even gone so far as to tell Mr. Langhton, he wished his grandson might make as good a use of fortune's favours.

But to return to the present time—Malcolm assured the party that he should make a point of returning in time for their dinner-hour.

“Which we shall make an hour later to-day, my Lord,” said Lady William; “as we have no service till vespers, and do not wish to confine you to our very old-fashioned ways;” requesting he would say whatever he thought most expressive of her respect for them to Lady Winifred, and the Earl and Countess of Algernon.

“And let me request you would invite the Earl, in my name, to the Priory,” said Mr. Langhton: “he must ever be a welcome guest within its walls; as I shall ever feel myself greatly indebted to his liberality,

lity,

lity, for not having availed himself of the power your father's will gave him over my grandchildren."

Malcolm promised to deliver this message *verbatim*; and then, accompanied by his brother and Belthorpe, walked to the great door, where his horses and groom were in waiting; and having mounted, proceeded to the ancient family mansion of his great-aunt; which certainly, as Lord Dunluce had observed, bore some resemblance to a citizen's villa in the environs of the metropolis; still, as the house was very large, it appeared a very comfortable residence; and though the furniture was not fashionable, every thing was costly, rich, and accurately clean. Having dismounted at the grand entrance, he was conducted by the same servant out of livery, who had facilitated his father's first interview with Lady William Albany, into the breakfast-room, where Lady Winifred, the Earl, his Countess, and Lord Dunluce, were sitting; Miss Albany, having a slight sore throat, had

had not yet joined the family. The fact was, Lady Winifred did not chuse she should be upon intimate terms with Lord Dunluce, whose fashionable manners did not meet her approbation; and never having seen our hero, she wished to do so, before she introduced him to her ward; though she did not venture to hope that a man of his rank and fortune could marry the daughter of Mrs. Salvadore. Malcolm's person and first *abord* were so much to her taste, that she welcomed him with more than cordiality, even with affection, to Highwood; nor was the Countess less struck by his commanding figure and very prepossessing countenance, as she politely declared, that she found she had been greatly her own enemy, in not having accompanied the Earl to Scotland, since every letter he had written from thence, had increased her impatience to be introduced to the Marquis of Endermay.

Our hero was extremely flattered by so kind a reception, since the Earl seemed no less

less happy to see him; and Lord Dunluce declared he had thought every moment an age since they parted.

“ I am sorry your Lordship should have found Highwood, and my society, so disagreeable,” said Lady Winifred.

“ Heed him not, my dear aunt,” rejoined the Earl; “ he was dying of *ennui* in Scotland, even under the roof of Lord Endermay, who, out of compassion to his folly, hastened his journey southward.”

Malcolm confirmed what his uncle had advanced, in so droll a way, that he soon dispelled the cloud which had gathered upon Lady Winifred’s brow; of whom he inquired after Miss Albany, and was informed she was indisposed; but by way of softening his disappointment, the old lady hoped she would be well enough to see him when he next visited Highwood, as she should often expect to see him during his stay at the Priory. “ And when you are suffered to leave Mr. Langhton’s,” she proceeded, “ I hope you will join Lord
and

and Lady Algernon here—as they have kindly promised to prolong their visit, that I may enjoy at least a week of your company.”

Malcolm made a suitable reply to this invitation, having long wished to be upon friendly terms with all his relations; and as he was anxious to acquit himself of the commission he had received from Lady William Albany, he, in appropriate terms, expressed the wish she entertained, to renew her acquaintance with the Earl and Lady Winifred, and to be introduced to the Countess; excusing her past appearance of neglect to the two former, under the real plea of her not being her own mistress; and concluding by delivering Mr. Langhton's message to his uncle *verbatim*.

Lady Winifred declared she was extremely ready to excuse any errors which arose from a too rigid notion of filial duty: she had seen very little of Lady William Albany, but enough to convince her that
she

she was an exemplary daughter, and as such she thought her highly deserving of her esteem, since she honoured, instead of blaming her for the obedience she had evinced to her father's commands; and should, in consequence, though not included in Mr. Langhton's invitation, pay an early visit at the Priory."

"And I will ride over on Saturday morning," said the Earl, "as I am very anxious to see my wards that were to have been. Dunluce is no less impatient to see his cousins; but I shall not bring him with me on Saturday, as I must feel my own way before I introduce such an *etourdi* into such a sober family."

Lady Winifred looked her approbation of this determination, while Lord Algernon requested his nephew would give him his opinion of his brother and sister.

"Rosalie is a very fine girl, my Lord, and infinitely more accomplished than, all things considered, I could have supposed; a very little polish will render her a diamond

mond of the first water. Algernon is also, I make no doubt, a very good scholar; but a life of total seclusion is less favourable to young men than to young women, as there is a rusticity in his manners which is by no means so prepossessing as Rosalie's reserved timidity; yet he appears to possess a very good heart, and seems to have taken a great liking to me. I have it, therefore, in contemplation to request Mr. Langhton will allow him to spend a month or six weeks in London with me, next spring."

"I much doubt the old gentleman's acceding to your plan, Marquis," resumed Lady Winifred: "nay, I can hardly wish he may, since, should the young rustic be guilty of any follies, they would all be attributed to his having associated with his Protestant brother. But you have interested me so much for your sister, that I will positively invite her to accompany me and Miss Albany to town next season, as I mean my ward should be presented at St. James's; and, I suppose, as their mother appeared

appeared at court, Mr. Langhton cannot object to his grandchildren's paying their respects to our royal family."

The Countess of Algernon could not conceive he would, adding—"Your Ladyship's kind intentions will render mine nugatory, as I also meant to have invited Rosalie Albany to have spent a month in Portland-place; though I feared my volatile son would have proved a serious objection to Mr. Langhton. Your plan is, therefore, far better; and I shall expect you will be my frequent guests when you do visit London."

"You ladies remind me of the Hunters and the Deer," said the Earl; "you are dividing the skin before you have killed the animal; as I think it very possible Mr. Langhton may not suffer either of his grandchildren to leave the Priory during his lifetime. However, I will assist in your's and the Marquis's charitable designs, to the best of my abilities. But you
have

have not told us, nephew, whether your brother resembles his late father."

"He has certainly duck-eyes—but there the likeness ceases. Mr. Langhton thinks him the image of a brother of his; which is very possible, as the portrait of Mr. Reginald Langhton, never a good one, is very much faded and injured by time; of course, it bears no great resemblance to Algernon, who may nevertheless be extremely like the original. Rosalie is the living picture of her mother; and, at times, particularly when she is animated, she reminds me of my father's picture."

"Then I am convinced she is very handsome," rejoined the Earl. "But have you been suffered to walk over the holy pile?"

Our hero gave a very animated and correct description of the interior of the Priory; though he did not mention having seen Mr. Langhton's cell, nor having peeped into the Padre's vaults; still less did he touch upon the mysterious turret.

He

He succeeded, nevertheless, in highly amusing his auditors; Lady Winifred declaring that she perfectly remembered the oriel chamber in which he slept, as she was received in that room when she paid Lady William her lying-in visit; expressing her astonishment at his being able to enjoy any repose, in such a gloomy, melancholy apartment.

“ You forget, aunt, that the Marquis is a soldier, and they are not apt to understand the meaning of the word fear.”

“ Oh, I should not mind sleeping in the chapel,” cried Lord Dunluce, “ if Mr. Langhton would but give me an invitation.”

“ I am fearful you would soon be tired of so cold a birth,” replied Malcolm.

“ And I am sure Mr. Langhton would soon be tired of you,” obtruded Lady Winifred.

“ Does Belthorpe improve upon acquaintance?” asked the Earl.

“ He appeared to more advantage in
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Scotland than he does at the Priory—there he was acting a natural part; at home, I am fearful he sometimes enacts the hypocrite. Indeed, Mr. Langhton is so strict in his notions, that the family must be all saints, or the exact reverse, to conform to his rules,”

Here the conversation was broken in upon by the entrance of the groom of the chambers, who informed Lord Algernon that Lord Newhaven and Major Sedley were in the drawing-room.

“They are quartered at Preston,” said the Earl, looking at his aunt; “we saw them there the other day *en passant*; and when they understood I was coming here; they talked of beating up my quarters. I suppose they would not have gained admittance at the Priory, Marquis; a red coat, except upon your back, must be held in abhorrence there. But I will not keep them waiting—the ladies will excuse you, Lord Endermay, and I know this visit is as much to you as to me.”

“I hope

“I hope you will suffer me to come in for my share of the compliment, Sir,” said Lord Dunluce.

“Oh, by all means! though I am not conscious that any one was intended you.”

The young peer nevertheless accompanied his father and cousin into the drawing-room; and Lord Newhaven, who was colonel of a regiment then at Preston, expressed his joy at having timed his visit to Highwood so opportunely, since he dare not have ventured to ring at the Priory gates, which seemed always impenetrably closed against strangers; and he and the Major were come to invite the Earl, Lord Endermay, and Lord Dunluce, to dine with the corps of officers at Preston, on the following Thursday; as they were all anxious to be introduced to one of the heroes of Egypt.

“There was but one hero on that memorable day, my Lord,” gaily resumed Malcolm, “and his example induced every man under his command to do his duty—

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but

but the late Sir Ralph Abercromby is entitled to all the honour of the day."

"I commend your modesty, Marquis; but you have also earned a wreath of never-fading laurel in that memorable engagement—so may we hope to see you at Preston?"

"I will be answerable for us all three," resumed Lord Algernon; "since the Marquis, though a resident at the Priory, has not yet renounced the world."

"What a strange life Mr. Langhton leads, if report may be credited!" replied the Major. "Mr. Albany has been pointed out to me, when riding with his tutor—I am surprised how a young man of his age can bear such close confinement."

"He must be a very domesticated amiable character, I should presume," rejoined the Viscount; "I suppose it is a mere compliment to make the request, else we should be extremely happy if he would accompany you to Preston, Marquis."

"He will, at least, be highly flattered
by

by your polite invitation, my Lord; as to whether he will be permitted to profit by it, I cannot take upon me to say; but I will endeavour to prevail upon Mr. Langhton to allow him freedom of choice upon the occasion. Or, perhaps, my uncle will undertake that task; he is much the most likely to succeed, and has a sort of authority over my brother, which I have not."

"We will unite our efforts," said the Earl; "so do not mention the matter till I pay you my promised visit, when I do hope we shall succeed in liberating the young prisoner for a short time."

This being settled, the officers soon made their parting bow; and our hero, having returned to the ladies, followed their example, as it grew late, promising to ride over again early in the ensuing week; and he was no sooner gone than Lady Winifred expressed her approbation of his figure, manners, and conversation, in the most unqualified terms.

The Countess was no less pleased with

him, observing that the army was the school for gentlemen; and the Marquis was intirely free from the puppyism and presumption so generally attributed to officers of his age.

“He is, indeed, an honour to his profession,” said the Earl: “of his bravery and skill, he has given the greatest proofs.”

“And so might I have done,” interrupted Lord Dunluce, “had you suffered me to go into the army, as I wished, Sir.”

The Countess did not suffer his having broke in upon his father’s discourse to pass unnoticed; and Lady Winifred was still more severe in her animadversions. The Earl, therefore, proposed a ride to him, as he was extremely fond of him, though by no means blind to his failings, and was in hopes, that time, and the society and example of his cousin, would render him every thing he could wish.

CHAP. III.

THE Marquis having reached the Priory in very good time, made a hasty toilette before he joined the family in the parlour, who were all very happy to hear the Earl meant to visit the ancient pile on the Saturday; Mr. Langhton having conceived a very high opinion of him, in consequence of the Father's having frequently expatiated of late upon the great forbearance his Lordship had displayed, respecting Algernon and Rosalie; and never failing to conclude his panegyrics upon the Earl, by a wish that he would take upon him to introduce Algernon into life, who was now

at an age to mix more in society than he had hitherto done; and as Mr. Langhton had long been implicitly guided by the wily monk, never presuming to contest any point with him, he now felt as anxious to introduce his grandson to the Earl's notice, as he had formerly been to keep him at a distance from his Lordship.

During dinner, little of moment occurred, and when they adjourned into the other parlour, the old gentleman asked our hero, whether he ever played at chess?

"Sometimes," he replied, readily sitting down with the old bigot, wishing to keep him in good humour, and to stand high in his good graces, as it might induce him to suffer his brother to visit London during the spring; not being aware that Father Benedetto was extremely anxious to have the young Catholic introduced to every member of the Derwent family, and initiated into the gaieties of fashionable life, under the auspices of Lord Algernon and our hero, who was a very good match for

Mr.

Mr. Langhton at chess, which certainly raised him in that gentleman's opinion, who was extremely partial to this game, and generally devoted his leisure hours to it.

At seven o'clock, as usual, the family adjourned to vespers; Lady William only remaining behind, who immediately asked the Marquis—"How he liked Lady Winifred?"

"Much better than I expected, I give you my honour; and she did you such ample justice, appearing so fully to understand and to appreciate the motives for your long seclusion from the world, that I am convinced she will not, in future, suffer you to estrange yourself from so near a relation."

He next reverted to the Countess, of whom he spoke in the highest terms, not forgetting Lord Dunluce, who, instability apart, he observed, was a very amiable young man, and all impatience to be introduced to her and his cousins—proceed-

ing to inform her where he was invited to dine on that day week, and that his brother was expected to join the party, which his uncle meant to make a point of when he came on Saturday; and he had been so passive hitherto, that he thought Mr. Langhton would not chuse to refuse him so trifling a favour.

“I hope not, Marquis; though I hardly dare hope that Algernon will be permitted to leave home, except in company with his tutor; nevertheless, I feel extremely grateful to both you and the Earl, since nothing would make me so happy as to have him placed under your joint protection for a short time.”

Malcolm thought Mr. Langhton could not object to his brother being introduced into society; but not chusing to dwell upon the subject, he reverted to Lady Winifred's ward, observing that he had not had the advantage of seeing the young lady.

“I wonder at that,” she replied, “since I dare

I dare say her Ladyship is anxious to have her well married; and I know (Belthorpe is my authority) that it has been whispered in the neighbourhood, that Lady Winifred wished she might captivate the Marquis of Endermay."

"She did me very great honour," replied the laughing Malcolm; "but from my uncle and cousin's account of the young lady, I am well assured that we shall never be nearer related."

This Lady William thought very probable; and he was, by her desire, entering into some details respecting the origin of Miss Hannah Albany, when the family party joined them; and the Marquis retired, as he had done the night before, with the master of the house.

Donald, while assisting him to undress, wished, but hardly knew how, to revert again to the inhabitant of the mysterious turret; since Ashton had never alluded to the circumstance during the day, and ei-

ther was, or chose to appear, wholly unconscious of what he had let drop the preceding evening. Wishing, however, to draw his lord into conversation, he said—
“The servants and horses were very comfortably situated at Chedworth, which is a very pleasant village,”—he went on—
“though there are no families of note in it, if we except Mr. Langhton’s and the Rector’s; though there are several rich farmers, who are tenants of the former gentleman, whom he grieves to think are Protestants; and they as sincerely lament his being a Catholic, since they are rack-rented; it seems—little as Mr. Langhton affects to care about money; but he has those about him who know the full value of a guinea—Father Benedetto for one—and his jackall, as they term Mr. Belthorpe, who are both of them more than disliked in the village, since a Protestant might die of want at the very gates of the Priory; though nothing is too good for some
French

French ladies, Catholics of course, who reside at Hilton, about two miles from hence."

"I am sorry Mr. Langhton's charity is so confined," resumed our hero; "though his being a Catholic is alone sufficient to render him unpopular in a country village."

He then dismissed Donald, without, to his great disappointment, touching upon their over-night's discourse; though our hero certainly retired to bed less charitably disposed than ever towards Catholics in general, since no man might have been more beloved and respected than Mr. Langhton; whereas, owing to his secluded life and narrow mind, he was now an object of hatred and derision even to his tenants and neighbours; and had, by his mistaken severity and erroneous tenets, evidently rendered his grandson's principles very lax, since he fancied the mere lip-deep homage he offered his Creator would atone for every error.

Donald

Donald was still less inclined to sleep than his lord, as he was all impatience to explore the secrets of the turret-chamber, yet could not devise any scheme likely to answer the desired end, since he dare not ask old Ashton's assistance, and he knew the Marquis would be seriously offended, should he undertake to fathom this mystery of his own head. He had promised not to mention the circumstance without the walls, or he might have persuaded some of his fellow-servants to scale the turret in the dark, and thus gratify his curiosity; but that might not easily be done; and much as Mr. Langhton and the priests were despised in the neighbourhood, it might not be safe to make so daring an attempt to penetrate into this mysterious attic.

At last, however, he forgot himself; and at his usual hour he appeared at his master's bedside, whom he found awake, having been, like himself, revolving in his own mind, which was the most probable method

method he could pursue, to satisfy himself respecting the person it was supposed inhabited the room over the Padre's. Not having, however, come to any decided resolution, he did not chuse to mention to Donald what was passing in his mind, for fear it should lead him to commit some rash action, by way of fathoming this strange mystery.

The morning proving as fine as the preceding one, the Marquis gave orders to have his horses brought to the Priory immediately after breakfast; and, of course, mentioned his intention of exploring the environs, when he met the family. Mr. Langhton immediately desired his grandson to prepare to accompany his brother, as he could point out the pleasantest paths to his Lordship, who, while Algernon was gone to equip himself for his ride, strolled out into the gardens with Rosalie; and having led her, as by chance, towards the chapel, he raised his eyes towards the mysterious turret, which he now perceived
was,

was, as his valet had represented, strongly fortified without side with a strong iron *chevaux de frize*, which was let into the wall, that had evidently been heightened very lately; he also saw where the Gothic windows in the upper room once had been; but they were now closely bricked-up; therefore, the only light the apartment could receive must be, as Donald had told him, from above.

“Are the apartments in that turret occupied by any of the family?” he carelessly asked his companion.

“The lower room is merely an anti-chamber to the chapel,” she replied; “Father Benedetto has always inhabited the one above—those Gothic windows give light to his apartment.”

“Which must be very lofty, I should presume—to judge by the height of the walls.”

“Oh, there is a third room over the Father’s, which is fitted up for an observatory, I have been told; but I have never
been.

been permitted to contemplate the planets from thence—though I have been assured there is a very fine telescope, properly fixed for making observations, under a sky-light. Indeed, I recollect the turret undergoing a very great alteration, by the Father's directions, to enable him to study astronomy; and as he has long been sole governor here, I never venture to perplex him with questions which he does not chuse to answer."

"But why, dearest Rosalie, does he not suffer you to benefit by the observation he makes upon the heavenly bodies, in this said turret-chamber—since his own room is inaccessible, Algernon tells me?"

"Had you been brought up in a Catholic family, my dear brother, you would not have asked such a question; since we are all required merely to see, hear, and speak, as our ghostly father directs. The most innocent curiosity is deemed a sin, since Father Benedetto requires us to be mere automatons in his hands: a good Catholic,
according

according to his creed, is an absolute passive machine, whose actions, nay, very thoughts, are all regulated by his or her confessor."

Before the Marquis could reply, Algernon, who was ready booted and spurred, came towards them, calling—"Brother, your horses are arrived—and mine is ready, if you are inclined to be moving."

"I am at your orders," was the reply.

"I wish you were going with us, my dear Rosalie. Do you never venture on horseback?"

"I have never yet made the attempt, Marquis; and I am fearful I should be very timid and very awkward."

The approach of Algernon, with whom they returned into the house, prevented Malcolm from pursuing the subject; and he proceeded with his brother across the hall, who ran forward to the great door, and not fancying his saddle was properly placed, chose to alter it, while the Marquis was taking leave of Lady William and
his

his sister. Our hero's groom was highly amused by Algernon's awkwardness; indeed he could hardly keep his countenance while holding his lord's stirrup; but having at last arranged his nag to his mind, he mounted, and rode after his brother, regretting that Belthorpe was prevented from joining their party; but it being Friday, he always devoted the morning of that day to the confessional chair, for the benefit of the household.

Having taken a pleasant circuit of a dozen miles or more, they reached a small retired hamlet, at the further extremity of which stood a remarkably neat cottage.

“The French ladies I once mentioned to you, brother, reside there,” said Algernon, pointing with his whip, “Madame de La Tour and her daughter. I must just ask them how they do, if you have no objection, as they may feel offended, should they see me ride by. They both speak very tolerable English—but you can talk French, I dare say: as for me, I have learnt
more

more from Pauline de La Tour than from Belthorpe—I wished Rose to have become her pupil; but my mother is not very fond of French people nor French manners; and Father Benny, as we style him for shortness, would not second my plans—indeed, he wants to keep me from visiting at Hilton; but Belthorpe is my confessor, and he says I ought to be kind to people in distress; so the Padre's lectures are of no avail: besides, why should he hinder me from associating with women of rank, and of whom he entertains a very high opinion, and whom I should never see else, but of Sundays and holidays?—and not always on the latter, or you would have seen them on Wednesday—but Madame was not well. However, here is their door—shall we call, or will you ride on, while I just say how do ye?”

“I could not think of being so rude,” rejoined Malcolm, which induced his brother, who had already reined in his horse, to call out—“Who is at home there?”

which

which was certainly proof positive of his being upon pretty intimate terms with the ladies, who soon appeared at their door, and having welcomed Mr. Albany, and expressed their joy to see him, they hoped he and his friend would do them the honour to alight.

“Can you make it worth our while?” asked the unpolished Algernon; “have you any thing to give us for our luncheon, as I am very hungry?—we have been taking a long ride.”

“Then I am very glad,” said Madame, in tolerable good English, “that we have something to offer you, I am sure you will like.”

“What say you, Marquis?” cried Algernon; “I can make free, and this is Friday—you take me?”

Our hero smiled, while the matron exclaimed—“The Marquis of Endermay, I presume? Why did not you introduce us to his Lordship, Mr. Albany? every avowed enemy of Buonaparte, and such are all officers,

officers, I hail as the saviours of my poor distracted country."

During this speech Algernon had dismounted, and having thrown the bridle of his horse over the railing in front of the cottage, he ran forward with Pauline, to inspect the larder, he said. Madame chose to remain at the gate till the Marquis alighted; and while so doing, owing to a glass opposite the parlour window, he perceived his brother saluting Pauline very cordially; but almost immediately running out again, he cried—"Come along, brother—faith! considering the day, we are in high luck."

Malcolm gave him credit for his attempt to dupe him into a belief that he had been visiting the larder; but as Madame remained stationary, he gave his horse to his groom, who with difficulty suppressed his smiles, having been no less clear-sighted than his lord, who now followed the lady of the house into the cottage, where Pauline and a servant-girl were busily em-

ployed in decorating the table, in a very decent parlour; and a cold partridge pie, potted hare, &c. were soon set out.

“Come, brother, we will dispense with grace for once: this is fast-day at home, so I generally contrive to call here, by way of laying in a good foundation previous to our fish-dinner.”

Malcolm felt hurt at this open dereliction from the tenets of his belief; but not chusing to express his disapprobation, merely said—“You have not introduced me to these ladies, Algernon.”

“Oh, I never stand upon ceremony. But this is Madame, the Marchioness de La Tour, whose husband was a marquis, and an officer like you—she was lady of honour to the late Queen of France—his Lordship was guillotined by Robespierre; and she, after being confined, for God knows how long, with Mademoiselle Pauline, at last, at the risk of her own life, and that of some of her friends, made her escape to England; and the Bishop of St.

Pol

Pol de Leon recommended her to Padre Benedetto, as she wished to live in the country——But enough of melancholy retrospections——let us endeavour to drown sorrow; what signifies reverting to the past? let us enjoy the present. Ladies, this is my brother-in-law, the Marquis of Endermay; and when you know more of him, you will like him as well as I do.”

Madame, who had had recourse to her cambric handkerchief, during this short recapitulation of her misfortunes, soon recovered her spirits, and pressed the Marquis very much to partake of the dainties before him. He begged to be excused, as Mr. Langhton dined so early, and he very seldom took any thing between meals.

“But you will only have fish and eggs at the Priory,” cried Algernon, helping himself to some partridge-pie.

“They will be a greater treat to me than to you,” was the reply; “but were I to follow your example, I should not be able to do any honour to my dinner.”

“Then

“Then do as you please, as I must sink the luncheon at home; for grandfather is even a more strict observer of fast days than the Padre—is he not, Madame?”

“They are both excellent men, my young friend; Father Benedetto is, perhaps, rather the most indulgent of the two: and I own, I think, at your age, you require more solid food than you are allowed, on these days, to partake of at the Priory, else I would not tempt you to break through the almost monastic rules of that house.”

This was evidently said to excuse herself to our hero, for conniving at what he was convinced Mr. Langhton would have reprobated in the most severe manner. While, however, Algernon was gratifying his appetite with these forbidden viands, she expatiated upon the miseries she had endured since the revolution. Malcolm could only wonder she had survived the sufferings which, according to her own account, she had undergone; since, having been in the suite of the unfortunate Maria

Antoinette, she had been in a peculiar perilous situation: but as neither her manners nor address led him to suppose she had ever been even presented at Versailles, he paid very little attention to her prolix narrative. Pauline was very handsome, and no fool, he thought. Madame had also the remains of a fine face, and had been once, he could suppose, very like her daughter, to whom she still bore a great resemblance. Of Belthorpe they both spoke in the highest terms; Madame had known him abroad, and had long felt the greatest esteem for him: but as our hero was by no means interested in these details, he reminded his brother that time wore, hinting that he should not chuse to make dinner wait at the Priory.

“Nor I, by Jove! so we will be O.B.G. as Belthorpe says, if you will neither eat nor drink any thing.”

Malcolm again excused himself; and at last, to his great joy, they were suffered to depart; Madame hoping that the Marquis
would

would look in upon them again, during his morning airings, while at the Priory. He merely bowed in reply, not feeling at all inclined to be upon a more intimate footing with them; though from various remarks which he made, which rather raised Madame in his opinion, he was convinced that she did not wish Pauline and his brother to be upon the intimate terms they evidently were; for which he gave her great credit, as she must be conscious that Mr. Langhton would never forgive his marrying even a Catholic, who was a mere dependant upon his bounty.

Having ridden from the door, Algernon inquired what he thought of Madame and Pauline.

"I have seen too little of them, to venture to give an opinion of them."

"They are really women of rank," was the rejoinder; "Belthorpe knew Madame when she lived in just such a style as you do at home; and he thinks that, after a time, Pauline may come in for some of

her father's fortune, as she was so young when he was guillotined—he was Madame's confessor at Paris."

"And pray, who confesses Pauline now?" asked his Lordship, in a droll tone, looking full at his brother.

"Oh, he does of course: she was for some years at the convent at Pontoise, near Paris, to which he was confessor—that brought him acquainted with the mother."

"And must she inform him how tenderly you saluted her this morning?"

"Oh, fie!" replied the rather-confused Algernon; "what, kiss and tell! that forms no part of our creed—and I cannot often do so, for Madame has an eye like a hawk. The Padre would condemn me to spend half my days, if not nights, for six months, in the chapel, if he was as wise as you are—so, for God's sake, don't mention the circumstance at home; let me tell where we have been, and all about it, and I warrant me I will bring myself off with flying colours; though, as I told you before, Father
Benny

Benny does not approve of my visiting Hilton."

"Would Mr. Langhton be more indulgent, were he to know why you visit there?"

"Not he, truly; he makes no allowances for youth; now the Father does wink at some things—but as for grandfather, his heart, as Belthorpe says, is impenetrable; he was never in love but with his patron saint—I only wonder he ever married; and my mother has a good deal of his coldness about her. As for me, I take after our father, I am sure, for I love a pretty girl, and a drop of good wine, to my soul."

Our hero did not chuse to contradict him, though he was well convinced that he bore very little resemblance to his father, even in point of disposition, who, though a very dissipated, and, in many respects, a very immoral character, was by no means addicted to low pursuits, nor to the bottle. Malcolm was therefore more inclined to compare his brother to their deceased

uncle, whom he thought he bid very fair to emulate, whenever he became his own master.

Having reached the Priory portal during his reverie, our hero alighted and delivered his horse to his groom, walking forwards with his brother, who whispered, when they separated in the hall—"Not a word of the luncheon, or the kiss, if you have any regard for me."

"I shall suffer you to tell your own story," was the reply, hastening to his own room, convinced that Algernon's principles were very relaxed. He was, therefore, rather undecided whether he should invite him to visit him in London; since, like Lady Winifred, he foresaw that many of his follies would be laid at his door.

As he seemed lost in thought while dressing, Donald durst not break in upon his reverie, though when he had occasion to speak to the valet, it was with his usual affability; and while he was helping him on with his coat and waistcoat, certain he would

would learn the circumstance from the groom, and wishing to hear the general opinion which was entertained of them, his Lordship said—"I called with my brother upon the French ladies you have heard mentioned, Donald; they are very comfortably situated at Hilton, and are very pleasant chatty women; the French revolution obliged them to emigrate, and their being Catholics has interested this family in their favour."

Now Donald had heard these said ladies spoken of very lightly at the Nag's-head; and even Ashton had hinted, that he believed Mr. Belthorpe consoled Madame for the loss of the Marquis; but he durst not retail these scandalous suggestions to his lord; therefore merely replied—"He had heard Hilton was a very pleasant place;" but did not venture to make any remarks upon the emigrants, which was a convincing proof to his master, that he had not heard them spoken of in very high terms.

“Has Ashton ever renewed the subject you discoursed upon the other night?” inquired our hero.

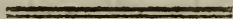
“Never, my Lord; but I am sure he told me truth in some respects; since I have minutely examined the turret from the road, and it is very easy to perceive that the windows have been bricked up, and that it is fortified even against the approach of cats—for even they would hardly dare to scale the *chevaux de frize* that runs round the upper wall.”

“Very probably they were the occasion of its being put up; since the Father might apprehend they would break the sky-light, and damage his instruments, in their nocturnal rambles; as I understand, and from very good authority, the upper room is really an observatory.”

“May be so, my Lord; but I cannot help having my doubts—since telescopes neither eat nor drink. However, it certainly does not concern me; though I cannot

not help being anxious to discover why so much pains were taken to render this attic inaccessible."

The last dinner-bell prevented our hero from replying, as he hastened down to join the family.



CHAP. IV.

MR. Langhton thought it necessary to apologize to his guest, for setting him down to a fast-dinner; alledging that he dare not place temptation in the way of his household. The Marquis again assured him that he was very partial to fish; and he was not sorry to see a blush of shame tinge his brother's cheeks, when he caught his eyes

upon him. The cloth being removed, the conversation naturally turned upon the environs of the Priory ; and Mr. Langhton asked his grandson, where he had taken the Marquis of Endermay ? He detailed the route they had gone, adding—" We took Hilton in our way home. Madame de La Tour was at her gate when we rode by, and pressed us so much to alight, my brother agreed to oblige her."

Malcolm felt his colour rise, while Algernon was thus distorting facts ; still he did not chuse to contradict him.

" Madame de La Tour is a very sensible, well-informed woman," rejoined Mr. Langhton, " and extremely grateful for the trifling favours I have conferred upon her."

" She is certainly truly deserving of the recommendation the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon gave her," obtruded the Father, " as she conforms in every respect to her circumstances ; and there is no small merit in
so

so doing, when people, like her, have moved in the first circles."

"I perfectly agree with you, Father," said our hero, who conceived the friar's last speech was particularly addressed to him; "yet, as Madame de La Tour is partial, she told me, to a country life, she cannot be more agreeably situated."

Lady William did not join in the conversation; and Rosalie busied herself in paring a golden pippin, not feeling inclined to say any thing in favour of these said amiable emigrants. Mr. Langhton believed they were very devoutly inclined, adding—"Had the English laws tolerated her so doing, Mademoiselle Pauline wished to have taken the veil; but though many religious communities have been received in Great Britain, they are not suffered, I understand, to increase their numbers."

Belthorpe neither seemed nor felt exactly at his ease; and was, in his soul, very angry with his pupil, for having taken his brother to Hilton; as his want of appetite

at dinner convinced him that he had broke his fast at the cottage; and he had seen enough of the young soldier to know, that he acted strictly up to his own profession of faith, therefore certainly would not approve of some of Algernon's private indulgences; but as this was not the time to vent his spleen upon his unguarded pupil, he lamented, with Mr. Langhton, that the fair Pauline stood no chance of increasing the sisterhood of nuns.

Malcolm, not chusing to speak his real sentiments of the young lady, remained silent, and was not sorry when Mr. Langhton again challenged him to a game at chess; and they were no sooner seated at the board, than the friar withdrew, possibly to his private devotions; and Belthorpe and his pupil retired into their study, where the former gently blamed his *élève* for having taken the Marquis to Hilton, and still more for having indulged his appetite before him.

Algernon laughed at his scruples, declaring

declaring his brother saw nothing reprehensible in his conduct—"He was not hungry, else he would have followed my example. You know what he said of St. Bartholomew—and I tell you it is only politeness that prevents him from laughing in the Padre's face, when he gives him his blessing, and mumbles out *benedicite*. He will never peach, I am convinced—nay, for fear he should unawares blunder out with any thing that might bring me into any trouble, he desired me to tell my story my own way."

"That was certainly very kind; still I would have you be more upon your guard—Lady William is very much attached to your brother, and if she should close question him, your visits at the cottage might be absolutely forbidden."

This surmise induced Langhton to promise he would be more circumspect, though he was sure the Marquis would not make mischief; yet he felt rather uneasy, when Malcolm and her Ladyship were, as usual,
left

left *tête-à-tête* during vespers; and certainly the latter immediately reverted to the ladies at Hilton, seriously inquiring, what his Lordship thought of them? He alledged having seen too little of them, to have formed any correct opinion of them; though he acknowledged he much doubted Madame de La Tour's ever having filled a distinguished post at Versailles.

“ Oh, I have never been the dupe of that improbable fiction,” rejoined her Ladyship, “ her manners are such a palpable contradiction to the tale; indeed, I am sorry to say I entertain but a very slight opinion of both mother and daughter, though I am under the necessity of treating them with common civility when they visit the Priory. The mother has been handsome; and Pauline is certainly a very fine girl—Algernon is, I fear, of the same opinion; for I have often watched them both, when I ought to have been otherwise employed: but when I fancy the happiness of my children is at stake, I am
even

even inattentive to my duty at chapel. I hope my son is not a frequent visitor at the cottage—did he seem to be upon a very intimate footing there, Marquis? Your rising colour is a sufficient answer to my question.”

“Nay, positively, my dear Madam, you misinterpret my change of colour. However, whether Madame de La Tour was or was not *dame d'honneur* to the beautiful Antoinette, she does not appear inclined to encourage any intimacy between my brother and Pauline, whom I own, nevertheless, I wish was immured in some convent, since she is so anxious to retire from the world. Yet, as Father Benedetto almost prohibits Algernon's visits to Hilton, I think you have no need to alarm yourself; besides, I hope my uncle will prevail upon Mr. Langhton to allow my brother to visit London this spring. Lady Winifred, I have already told you, talks of doing so, and of asking my sister to bear her company; which must, in my opinion,

opinion, induce Mr. Langhton to allow Algernon also to leave the Priory, when, admitting he may be rather too partial to the fair *émigrée*, he will soon forget her."

"There is certainly great justice in your remark, Marquis; and I do hope my father will agree to your very obliging proposal; but my son is so entirely dependant upon him, I dare not take so active a part as I could wish in the business. At Mr. Langhton's demise, the Priory and the annexed estate will descend to me, and in due course of time to Algernon; whether he could cut him off with a shilling, I cannot pretend to say—I only know that he certainly would do so, were he to incur his serious displeasure; at all events, he would not come in for a shilling of his personals, which must amount to a very considerable sum—though, I believe, Father Benedetto distributes something very handsome yearly, in charity—among Catholics, of course; and we have none in this neighbourhood, if I except the *émigrées*;

grées; therefore the poor of this parish are not included in these donations, which I think very wrong: but I am a mere cypher in the family; and though I now and then, through the means of my maid, am able to relieve a few poor women in Chedworth, I am confident we must be all despised and disliked in the village."

"I have been assured that every body does justice to your merits, Lady William; indeed, the whole blame seems to fall, where it ought, upon Father Benedetto."

"I am sometimes inclined to think I am too passive," resumed her Ladyship; "but it is a difficult matter to reconcile opposite duties; and were I to act in direct contradiction to my father's will, it would be a bad example for my children."

Our hero perfectly agreed with this excellent woman; but the return of the family prevented him from telling her so; and at his usual hour he retired for the night. While undressing, he was meditating how to satisfy his curiosity respecting

ing

ing the supposed observatory; and thought the best time to explore its mysteries would be at seven o'clock the next morning, while all the family were at mass. Should he, or should he not, inform Donald of his intentions, he considered. At last, however, he resolved to ascend the roof alone, as he knew there was a trap-door which opened upon the leads, in the lumber-room adjoining the Padre's vault, and the ladder to ascend to it he had seen lying by the side of the wall; he had, therefore, no need to inquire his way, as this opening must be within a few paces of the turret he wished to examine; and should he be obliged to relinquish his intention, he did not wish to have any one privy to his mortification; therefore dismissing his valet as usual, who had been surprised at his unusual taciturnity, he retired to bed, to meditate more at his ease upon the attempt he was resolved to make. In consequence he was up and dressed by seven o'clock, but waited very patiently
till:

till the bell for mass had ceased, as the family were then, he conceived, all safe in the chapel; and sincerely did he rejoice at Donald's having taken upon him to light his fire, since the uncertainty of the housemaid's coming into his room would else have prevented him from making, at least, an attempt to gratify his curiosity. At last, having put his head without the door, and convinced himself that no one was moving in any direction, he walked as gently as possible towards the lumber-room, and, as a preliminary step, took a peep into the vaulta—no one was there; therefore, after bolting himself in, to avoid being taken by surprise, he placed the ladder, and after cautiously undrawing half-a-dozen bolts in various directions, he got out into a wide gutter, close to the turret; but found, upon a nearer inspection of the *chevaux de frize*, which surmounted the walls, that it would be no very easy task to obtain a glimpse of the sky-light; and except he could look down that, he should
not

not be able to ascertain whether the attic was inhabited or not: yet, to have taken so much trouble, without at last gratifying his curiosity, would be very provoking, he conceived. He might have made shift to scramble up the wall, he thought; but it would be very difficult to clear the iron spikes, which projected in every direction, and which were at least eight feet from the place where he stood; and should he be caught in them, which was not improbable, he might pay pretty dear for his folly. He was, therefore, preparing to return, when, upon setting his foot upon the ladder, he reflected that he might, with the aid of that, scale the wall, if not clear the *chevaux de frize*; and as he only wanted to look down the sky-light, he hoped he should be able to do that; he was therefore preparing to draw the ladder up, when in bending down to effect his purpose, he caught sight of a large mat, which had evidently been left in that room for the workmen to wipe their feet upon, when they

they came down from their labour; he therefore hastily descended in search of it, conceiving it might be of service to him; and upon a nearer inspection, he found it so completely stiffened with dirt, and being of the kind he had seen sailors making on board ship, he was convinced that even the spikes of the *chevaux de frize* would not be able to penetrate it. He therefore eagerly seized it; and having once more ascended the ladder, hastily pulled it up after him, and placed it against the turret-wall; it was rather shorter than he could have wished; but having, when he reached the top, flung his mat over the projecting spikes, which he found were unable to penetrate through the thick coat of dirt it had imbibed, he, with some difficulty, and no small risk, at last, seated himself upon the summit of the iron fortification; but even then he could not look down the sky-light, as the small dome in which it was, was in the very centre of the turret.

Resolved,

Resolved, however, not to be disappointed, now he had got so far, he pulled the ladder up, and having fixed it on the other side, soon descended upon the leads which surrounded the dome, towards which he hastily approached, and upon looking down, met the eyes of a young man, nearly about his own age, who was in the very act of putting on a loose great-coat; but who, having been disturbed by the noise our hero had necessarily made, cautiously as he had endeavoured to move, stood with his arms extended, and his eyes fixed upon the unexpected intruder, whose animated handsome countenance did not lead him to apprehend he had much to fear; and as far as signs could reassure him, Malcolm tried to do so, giving him to understand he wished to speak to him; which induced him, after wrapping himself in his great-coat, by means of a line, to open a pane in the sky-light, the frame of which was all iron; and the small opening he seemed to have it in his power to make, would not have

3 sufficed

sufficed to pass his head through. Leaning over, our hero inquired—"Why are you confined in this strange way?"

The prisoner shook his head, as much as to say—"I do not understand you." And as his Lordship had spoken rather low, for fear of being overheard, he tried to put his face more through the opening; and the person he wished to address, no less anxious to know who he was, and from whence he came, mounted upon a table which was standing directly under the dome, and upon which some books were lying; and as the Marquis addressed him a second time to no purpose, he made him a sign to hand him one of the books, which, having previously placed a chair upon his table, he was able to do.

Never had our hero been more interested in favour of any fellow-creature; since, though far from clean in point of appearance, and seeming as if he had never been allowed the luxury of a razor, his dark hazel eyes beamed with sensibility, blended,

blended, our hero thought, with gratitude, who hastily opening the book he had given him, found it was the life of some Romish saint in Italian; therefore instantly addressing the prisoner in that language, he asked—"In the name of Heaven, why are you confined here?"

The wan countenance of the person he addressed instantly became animated, and he hastily exclaimed—"Am I then so happy as to be addressed in the only language I understand, and by a total stranger? May I inquire who you are, and how you reached my prison window?"

"You are then, as I suspected, a prisoner," rejoined the Marquis. "A strange story respecting the room you occupy, induced me to scale the surrounding walls, to satisfy my curiosity; and I have seized the only time that I could have done so, unknown to the family. So let me know whether I can be of any service to you; since I give you my word, I am a man of honour, and have both the power and the will

will to alleviate the miseries of my fellow-creatures. But moments even are precious—therefore, be candid, and tell me who you are, and what means I can pursue to convince you of the sincerity of my offers.”

This kind speech brought tears into the prisoner's eyes, who, at last, faltered out—“Your time must be too limited to listen to my short but sad story. Had I pen and ink, I think I could convince you that I am deserving of your pity.”

“I will provide you with writing materials very speedily,” rejoined the Marquis; “but as you value the friendship of a man whose curiosity, and a sort of vague hope that he might be serviceable to a fellow-creature, has induced him, at some risk, to pay you this unauthorised visit, be cautious—do not let a word, or even gesture, escape you, likely to create a suspicion of your having seen any one, in the mind of those by whom you are confined.”

While speaking, the Marquis returned

him the book, which having received, he raised his eyes to Heaven, saying, in Italian —“ By the sacred name of that all-powerful Being, who can alone read the secrets of all hearts, and who often, by the most extraordinary means, brings criminals to justice, I here swear never to mention having seen you.”

Tears of joy and gratitude almost choked his utterance, as he concluded; and our hero, who was also very much affected, after a moment's pause resumed—“ I am upon a visit at the Priory, and shall probably spend at least another week here. As I told you before, from some unguarded words which an old servant dropped, I suspected that there was some mystery attached to the room you occupy; and I have, to my great satisfaction, gratified my curiosity. I cannot positively settle when I can see you again; but I have a confidential servant, who has lived with me from my infancy; he shall endeavour to reach your prison window this evening;
as

as a token that he comes from me, he shall bring you pen, ink, and paper; and he shall rap at your sky-light, soon after seven o'clock, when the family will all be at vespers. Should, however, any thing unforeseen prevent his doing so, depend upon seeing me again, at this hour tomorrow morning, when I will furnish you with writing materials, as I am extremely anxious to learn why you are thus mysteriously confined. So, for both our sakes, be upon your guard; and let me intreat you would be perfectly sincere in your communications; since I must be more acquainted with many circumstances respecting you, than I am at present, before I can venture to interfere in your behalf."

"I will write you all I know respecting myself, generous stranger, which is but little, since I have been, in some respects, secluded from the world from my earliest infancy. You are an Englishman, I presume?"

"I am a Scotchman by birth; but my

father was an Englishman—Mr. Langhton's daughter was his second wife, and I am half-brother to her children."

"I never heard of the people you mention, though I suppose they reside in this house: an old Italian monk, and his servant, are the only people I have ever seen, since I have been immured in my present prison—the one was introduced to me as Padre Martini—the other is called Francisco."

"I dare not remain with you any longer, my new friend; since, for your sake, I particularly wish to reach my apartment again, unsuspected; though I am more impatient than ever to hear your eventful tale, since there must be some weighty reasons for keeping you so much in the dark, as you appear to me to have even been deceived respecting the name of your jailor. Therefore, rely upon my promise, that you shall either hear from me, or see me by this time to-morrow."

So saying, the Marquis once more ascended the ladder; and with some risk,
and

and no small difficulty, retraced his steps into the lumber-room, just as the great clock struck eight. Having hastily replaced the ladder and mat, he unbolted the door, and hastened back to his own room, without meeting or even hearing any one, till he reached Donald's door, who came out of his room at the very moment his lord was passing, and seemed astonished at seeing him up and dressed so early. Malcolm beckoned him to follow him into his apartment, not chusing to address him in the passage, which the valet did in silence, wondering where his Lordship could have been at such an hour.

"Light the fire," said Malcolm, "and then I will tell you what induced me to explore this old mansion alone."

Donald soon obeyed his orders, when our hero candidly told him where he had been, and the discoveries he had made.

"Then now, my Lord, I may venture to acknowledge that I have also-been upon the leads, as I had learned from Ashton

where the trap-door was; but I dare not attempt to scale the walls surrounding the turret, for fear Father Benedetto should have had the gratification of seeing me hanging upon one of his spikes. But now you have pointed out the means, and have run the risk of your own life, only put my courage to the test, as I would perform impossibilities to oblige you."

"I agree it is not a very easy matter to reach the poor prisoner; and if you entertain any serious fears for your safety, do not make the attempt. I am younger, and perhaps rather more active, and having—"

"Excuse the interruption, my Lord, since I cannot suffer you to believe that I am less active in the cause of humanity than you could wish. You have besides rendered the journey comparatively easy. Can your Lordship furnish me with pen, ink, and paper, now? for, methinks, I could reach the turret, and be back, before the family return from mass."

"That

“That would be impossible,” was the reply; “and I charge you, as you value my regard, to act with prudence. Besides, you must purchase the writing materials I promised the prisoner, since I have not a sufficient stock with me to supply his wants. But be sure you are careful not to excite any suspicions—and do not think of approaching the turret till the family are all at vespers; it will be dark, I know; but I think, as there is a little moon, you will be able to see your way. But, perhaps, the prisoner is not allowed a light—I am, therefore, almost afraid of your venturing; since I positively should never forgive myself, were you to meet with any accident.”

“I will take every precaution not to endanger my neck, my Lord, even if I contrive a paper lanthorn. Meanwhile, suffer me to brush your Lordship’s coat and pantaloons, which bear the marks of your late scramble over the spikes.”

“No doubt; and make haste, and put my
E 4 hair

hair to rights, else I shall keep breakfast waiting."

"Oh, how I should glory," rejoined the valet, "if that old monk was but doomed to solitary imprisonment for the rest of his life! since he must have had some vile motive for confining this poor young man—else, why need he have made such a secret of the matter? I only wonder he had not made away with him—but that, perhaps, might not have answered his purpose: besides, in England, he might be puzzled how to dispose of the body; in Italy, he might have left it even in the public streets, without exposing himself to suspicion."

Thus did Donald run on, while arranging his lord's hair, who having renewed his cautions, and desired him not to stir a step without his concurrence, walked down stairs, debating with himself whether he should mention the strange discovery he had made to his uncle, whom he expected would visit the Priory that morning;

ing; but finally resolved not to do so, at least at present: he must first learn the prisoner's story, then he should be able to decide what measures to pursue with Father Benedetto, towards whom he did not feel very cordially inclined, when he joined the family party.

CHAP. V.

Soon after breakfast, the Earl of Algernon rode into the cloistered court, and was, upon alighting, shewn into the oriel parlour, where the family were all assembled. Mr. Langhton had never seen him before, but gave him a very polite reception, and seemed to think himself honoured by his

F 5

visit;

visit; and his Lordship immediately set Lady William at her ease, by declaring, that if it had not been for her son and daughter, he should have fancied merely a few months had elapsed since their separation, she was so little altered.

“ My glass tells a very different tale, my Lord,” she gaily replied; “ though I might with justice have paid you such a compliment, still I have felt that many, many years have elapsed since our last meeting”—introducing him to Algernon and Rosalie; and, like our hero, he was much the most prepossessed in favour of the latter.

Her Ladyship then inquired after the Countess, Lady Winifred, and Lord Dunluce; and having assured her that they were all well, and very anxious to see her, his Lordship, having taken a seat, immediately entered upon the purport of his visit—not appearing to conceive it possible, that Mr. Langhton could object to his grandson's accompanying the Marquis,
him,

him, and Lord Dunluce, to Preston, since the dinner was evidently given in honour of Lord Endermay, he observed: and, as his Lordship had expected, the old gentleman found it impossible to put a negative upon his request; indeed, Father Benedetto, who well knew how to time his acquiescence, was the first to declare his intire approbation of the Earl's proposal—"It was time Mr. Albany saw a little of the world; and under whose auspices could he better make his first appearance, than under those of his uncle and elder brother? and he was convinced that no one had rejoiced more sincerely at the Marquis of Endermay's having so bravely earned so glorious a wreath of laurel in the service of his country."

The Earl was agreeably surprised to find himself thus ably seconded by so eloquent an advocate, to whom he paid several very acceptable compliments, as he really honoured good men of every persuasion; and our hero, who had finally resolved not

to condemn the friar upon mere suspicion, was not, it may be supposed, deficient in politeness upon this occasion. This matter being, however, settled to both his and Lord Algernon's satisfaction, the Earl proceeded to inform the gratified Lady William, that Lady Winifred and the Countess proposed calling upon her on Monday; as the one was very anxious to renew her acquaintance with her, and the other to be introduced to her.

"They do me infinite honour, my Lord, in thus dispensing with etiquette in my favour. I beg you will assure them, that I feel truly grateful for their kind intentions."

And even Mr. Langhton (who requested the Earl would bring Lord Dunluce with him, when he again visited the Priory), felt flattered by what he deemed a tribute of respect paid to his superior sanctity, and strenuously joined in requesting his guest would take some refreshment, who, to oblige him, eat a biscuit, and tasted his
sherry;

sherry; and, as he expressed his approbation of those parts of the building which he had already seen, Mr. Langhton walked over the lower part of the house with him, accompanied by the young men; and the Earl's praise was so judiciously timed, that the old bigot was in raptures, and more than ever attached to the ancient pile.

It was too late when his Lordship took his leave, to admit of our hero's riding any part of the way with him; but he promised to visit Highwood early in the week, as he felt greatly obliged to his kind uncle, for having so dextrously prevented Mr. Langhton from starting any objection to Algernon's joining their party on Thursday, who would, had he dared have taken such a liberty, he told his brother, have taken his uncle round the neck, and have hugged him very cordially—so much was he delighted with he thoughts of joining this 'dinner-party; stopping the Marquis, as he was going up to dress, to inquire,

inquire, how he ought to adorn upon this grand occasion?

“As you do in general—we shall not be expected to appear in gala suits.”

Having, however, resolved to cut a dash, as he told Belthorpe, he dispatched a servant for the village taylor, to whom he gave orders to make him a dark blue frock—the colour his brother generally wore, a white waistcoat, and drab small-clothes; desiring they might all be cut in the very last fashion. Mr. Carpenter, the *Snip* of Chedworth, promised to do his best; and Algernon, who had a very high opinion of himself, made no doubt of appearing to advantage at this dinner: but, by Belthorpe's advice, he forbore to dwell upon the approaching holiday, for fear Mr. Langhton should think him too eager after pleasure.

While he was, however, busily employed in giving orders for the decoration of his person, Donald was displaying to his master the purchases he had made for the prisoner,

prisoner, consisting of a quire of paper, a dozen pens, and a bottle of ink ; to which our hero added a pen-knife, and a kind billet in Italian, in which he entreated the young stranger to place implicit confidence in him ; briefly relating what Donald had learnt from Ashton, which had induced him to explore the mysteries of the turret-chamber, and candidly informing who he was, and who were the present inhabitants of the Priory, as he seemed not to know any thing about them ; hinting his suspicions, which amounted to a certainty, that the Padre Martini was, in fact, Padre Benedetto ; and promising that his servant, as least likely to be suspected, should call for his answer the following evening, at the same hour. This note Donald tied on the outside of his packet, having provided himself with a ball of packthread, assuring his lord, that he would not venture near the trap-door, till he was certain that the family were all at chapel.

The

The afternoon seemed unusually long to both master and man. Fortunately, Mr. Langhton did not propose chess to our hero, as he was convinced that he should have been check-mated in a very few moves—his mind was so full of the interesting prisoner, towards whom he already felt a sort of involuntary attachment. He was, therefore, exceedingly rejoiced to find himself left *tête-à-tête* with Rosalie, during the afternoon; as the old gentleman, Algernon, and Lady William, generally spent some time with their respective confessors every Saturday. With his sister he was under much less restraint; and by way of amusing her, and of diverting his own ideas into another channel, he gave her his opinion of the Countess and Lady Winifred, describing their persons so accurately, that she was sure, she said, she should know them both, were they to meet by chance. He next reverted to Lord Dunluce, to whom he did ample justice; though

though he agreed that he was the most volatile young man of his age he had ever met with.

“Then, I am sure, him and Algernon will be sworn friends,” said she; “for did he dare, he would display an equal share of levity; but though of the stronger sex, he is more afraid of Father Benedetto than I am, and is, to the full, as superstitious—therefore, the dread of offending his patron saint, will, at any time, deter him from acting wrong. Still my mother wishes he was more restrained by principle than by superstition; since, should he ever shake that off, she is fearful he will give into many follies. It must seem extraordinary, Marquis, but though we have been brought up together, Algernon and I never assimilated; indeed, we generally differ in opinion—of course, we have never been upon confidential terms with each other. Now I should find no difficulty in opening my whole heart to you, and yet you are a comparative stranger to me.”

“Our

“ Our near relationship placed us immediately upon a familiar footing with each other, my dear Rosalie; and henceforth, I trust you will consider me as your favourite brother, and the representative of your father, and, as such, bound to promote your happiness and welfare to the utmost of my power; since, believe me, my affection for you more than equals what you feel for me: and, to be as candid as you have been, Algernon and I shall never assimilate as you and I seem likely to do—nor never, I am convinced, be upon the same intimate terms, I hope, we shall ever be in future.”

The entrance of Lady William broke in upon their discourse; and, as she was almost immediately followed by her son, the conversation became general, till they were joined by Mr. Langhton and the priests. After tea, the Marquis was, as usual, left with his mother-in-law, who very fortunately, he conceived, as he was extremely absent, entered into a long retrospect of
past

past times, which the Earl's visit had brought very forcibly to her memory; and he listened with infinite complaisance, rejoicing at being spared the task of entertaining her; though, could he have been certain that Donald had executed his commission, and was safely returned, he felt that he should be once more perfectly at ease; yet he dare not make an excuse to retire to his own room, for fear he should thus lead to a discovery of whither he was gone; and should any accident have befallen him, what excuse could he alledge, for what must appear a very great breach of hospitality? When hearing the great clock strike eight, he with difficulty concealed his perturbation; and probably he would have betrayed his anxiety, if, to his great relief, after gently tapping at the door, Donald had not entered the saloon, respectfully inquiring—"Whether his Lordship had not, by mistake, put the key of his dressing-case into his waistcoat-pocket, as he had been looking for it in
vain,

vain, for the last half-hour?" perfectly relieved from all his late fears, since Donald's looks convinced him all was right.

Our hero felt in his pockets, by way of carrying on the farce, but declared he had not the key in question about him, telling the valet, it was of no consequence, since he could easily force the lock. Donald bowed and retired; and Lady William hoped it would be forthcoming. The Marquis made no doubt of its being found; but soon changed the subject, and was certainly making up for his late taciturnity, when the party joined them; and to his great joy, as he was extremely anxious to hear Donald's account of his secret expedition, it being Saturday night, Mr. Langhton made a motion to retire, immediately after supper, and the Marquis, as usual, followed his lead.

The valet was already in his apartment, and having convinced himself that all was safe, and that no one was upon the listen, he thus began—"As I always come up
into

into your Lordship's room, to prepare your evening toilette, when the servants go to vespers, I did so of course this evening; and here I remained very quiet, till a quarter past seven, when shrouding my wax taper in a paper lanthorn of my own contrivance, I stepped softly towards the lumber-room, and soon got out upon the leads, pulling the ladder and mat after me. The night was very clear—still, as I was not sure whether the prisoner was allowed a light, I contrived to fasten my lanthorn to the mat, and thus ascended, till I reached the *chevaux de frize*. I was some time in fixing my mat, and taking my seat—longer than your Lordship by one half, I dare say; but having, at last, settled myself, I had a convincing proof that I was expected, as I saw a stream of light proceeding from the dome, which induced me to leave my lanthorn still fixed to my mat, while I descended as hastily as was consistent with prudence—though, I can assure your Lordship, I was more afraid of exciting suspicion,

cion, should I prove clumsy, than of hurting myself; but having landed very safely within the walls, I approached the dome, and saw the single pane, your Lordship had so accurately described, open; I leant over it, and let down my parcel, making signs that all was safe—for the young man was standing upon a chair, which was placed upon the table, holding an iron rod, which, I suppose, he had taken from his bed, to the end of which he had fastened his wax-light—wishing, I presume, to facilitate my approach. How happy and how grateful he seemed, while opening the parcel! and when he read your Lordship's note, he cried like a child—and, I believe, the tears sprung into my eyes—he seemed so affected and so thankful; and as far as he could make me understand by signs, I am sure he will remember you in his prayers—having also made me understand, that he was going to obey your commands, and that he should secret his treasures behind his bed. I bid him good
night,

night, by signs also; endeavouring to make him understand when he should see me again. I had not half so much difficulty in getting back; and now that I know how to manage, I am sure I shall get up and down like a cat. But having placed every thing as I had found it, in the lumber-room, I stole back, as softly as I went, till I reached your chamber; when your Lordship having said you should be all anxiety till you were convinced that I was safe returned, I thought I might venture to shew myself in the parlour, if I could but frame a plausible excuse for so doing; and having actually missed the key of your dressing-case last night, I affected to have been hunting it this evening."

"You acted very prudently; for I was extremely anxious to see you," rejoined the Marquis. "However, now you have succeeded so well, I shall be less uneasy: but do not let your late success render you rash, since we cannot be of any service to this youth, except we act with the
greatest

greatest caution. Till I am more *au fait* of his story, I cannot decide how I may be able to serve him. So, good night—though I would have you rest assured, that your zeal to serve me shall not go unrewarded.”

Donald bowed very respectfully, and retired; since, though he was by no means actuated by interested motives, he rejoiced to find he stood so high in his lord's good graces; for whom, as he had told Ashton, he would at any time have gone through either fire or water.

CHAP. VI.

THE next day, being Sunday, our hero, while dressing in the morning, which he did for the day, asked Donald, whether the Rector of Chedworth was reckoned a good preacher? not feeling inclined to go to mass with the family.

“All those I have heard mention him, my Lord, declare he has not his equal in the pulpit; at all events, Dr. Murray is a very good man, since even the servants in this house give him an excellent character, and he is idolized in the village. In my humble opinion, if Mr. Langhton was to
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follow his example, he would make himself more sure of Heaven."

"Mr. Langhton does his duty, in his own opinion, and may be as charitably inclined as the Doctor; since I think it very possible that his agents frustrate his kind intentions, and lead him into errors. At all events, we have no right to condemn him, for strictly conforming to the faith he professes."

"Why, I dare say, my Lord, the old Italian is the most to blame; and if I was his friend, I would caution him against going out, or returning to the Priory, after dark, since he has many enemies in the village—and some who would not scruple dragging him through a horsepond, if an opportunity occurred; for most people think Mr. Langhton would be infinitely more liberal, but for him; but, as Ashton says, and the turret for the truth of that, the Father can make the old gentleman believe just what he pleases, or what best suits

suits his purpose. But, as for Dr. Murray, he visits both rich and poor when they are ill, and never fails to relieve the wants of the latter."

"Then I will certainly go and hear him," interrupted Malcolm, who being dressed, went down to breakfast.

Mr. Langhton had entertained some hopes that he would accompany them to mass, as he had been assured that many heretics were indifferent as to where, or in what mode, they addressed their homage to their Creator; and Father Benedetto, who always preached after high mass, which, on Sundays, was not performed till eleven, had prepared a discourse he hoped would make a great impression upon the young soldier. But to his great disappointment, immediately after breakfast, our hero wished the family a good morning, and sallied forth on foot. The friar, however, instantly recollected, that as his Lordship was in the army, he

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probably

probably dare not follow the dictates of his heart, since he might incur censure for attending any form of worship, except that of the established church. Mr. Langhton was of the same opinion; and Madame de La Tour and her daughter being arrived, for whom the family coach had been sent, they adjourned to chapel.

Meanwhile, the Marquis rambled about in some pleasant fields adjoining the village, by way of passing the time, till the church bell summoned him to his duty. His servants, who had learnt from Donald that he meant to be there, had all preceded him thither; indeed, he rather supposed, as he approached the church-yard, that his valet had made his intention known at the Nag's-head, as a sort of croud were assembled near the church-porch; and before he reached the outer gate, he saw the revered village pastor advancing from his own house, who waiting for him at the gate leading into the church-yard, bowed
very

very politely, saying—"I presume I have the honour of addressing the Marquis of Endermay?"

Malcolm bowed an affirmative, and the Doctor requested he would do him the favour to take a seat in his pew, and was convinced, while advancing up the avenue, that the young peer was to the full as polite as he was brave; and that he was not, like some modern men of fashion, prepared to quiz the rustic congregation; indeed, the report of his servants had greatly prepossessed him in our hero's favour, and he now found that they had barely done him justice.

They entered the church together; and the Doctor having pointed out his pew to the valet, our hero immediately joined three ladies, who were already seated in it, who all rose upon his approach, motioning for him to take what they deemed the best seat; this he absolutely declined, placing himself next the door; and never had he heard our excellent church service better

read than by the Doctor's curate, a very promising young man, whom the rector had long patronized; and the Doctor's sermon far surpassed his expectations. Indeed, he was much the most attentive auditor in the church, since his appearance, and his being a lord, which were very seldom seen at Chedworth, prevented the congregation from reaping the same benefit from a most excellent discourse, extremely well delivered. Indeed, the Marquis had never spent half an hour more to his satisfaction, and, he hoped, improvement: most sincerely did he wish his brother had been with him, as he was convinced that so impressive a moral lecture would have made far greater impression upon him, than any mystic sermon of the Father's had ever done.

As the church was more crowded than usual, Malcolm was not the first to leave the pew; the Doctor therefore joined him again, just as he was stepping out, after having merely bowed in silence to the ladies,

ladies, never having been introduced to them; but he now very cordially took the worthy rector by the hand, saying—"In common with all those present, I have to thank you, Doctor, for a most excellent discourse. I am only sorry there are not more such preachers among our church ministers; if there were, there would soon be no dissenters."

"And while we have such officers as your Lordship, we have no need to fear an invasion. Allow me to congratulate you, upon having escaped, comparatively unhurt, during your late glorious conflict with the boasted invincible legions, which were opposed to you."

"You do me honour, Doctor; though I did no more than all my brave companions in arms achieved; and I was certainly among the most fortunate upon that occasion. But do me the favour to introduce me to these ladies, upon whom you led me to intrude myself, I hope not to their inconvenience."

“ My wife, daughter, and niece, my Lord. I fancy I need not inform you, my dear, nor these girls, that this is the Marquis of Endermay”—who saw much to admire in Miss Murray, but still more in her cousin, who was a very beautiful girl, in her eighteenth year, extremely gay; and as there was no rusticity in her manners, appeared, like Miss Murray, to have received a very good education. They were both very elegantly dressed—the Doctor’s niece much the most in conformity to the reigning fashion; since Malcolm thought she, in some particulars, adhered rather too strictly to it.

As they soon reached the gate leading to the Rectory, the Doctor asked his Lordship if he would do him the honour to walk in? but presuming it was near their dinner-hour, it being Sunday, and knowing they dined at half-past-one at the Priory, he declined doing so, saying, in a gay tone—“ You know, Doctor, I am the inmate of a very unfashionable family, and
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am fearful I might make them wait dinner; but I shall certainly do myself the pleasure of calling at the Rectory before I leave the Priory," making his parting bow, as he concluded.

"Well, what think you of this young peer, Mrs. Murray?" asked the Doctor.

"What little I have seen of him, Doctor, has greatly prepossessed me in his favour; as he seems to be totally free from pride and affectation, and to be infinitely more polite than is strictly accordant with the reigning fashion."

"Well, I must own," said Charlotte Melbourne, the Doctor's niece, who was the eldest daughter of a rich London banker, who had married the Doctor's sister, "I was very much disappointed in the Marquis of Endermay—his appearance is by no means so fashionable as I had expected. He is certainly a very handsome man, and, what is generally termed, a very fine figure; yet I have seen lords to whom I should have given the preference; since

I am convinced, Lord Endermay has never yet seen much of life."

"Yet I should suppose he has always moved in the first circles, Charlotte," gravely replied the Doctor; "and I own I am very much at a loss to comprehend the exact meaning you affix to the word fashionable. To me, his Lordship appeared an elegant young man of rank and fashion, who, though dressed rather better than his groom, was certainly as little so, as I ever saw a man of equal rank, when not in his own house. But, possibly, you thought him too polite; and I am not sure whether he did not sin against the laws of fashion, when he requested to be introduced to the wife, daughter, and niece, of a country clergyman; or, possibly, he shocked you, by appearing too attentive to his duty, while at church."

"Nay, now you are laughing at me, Sir, since I find nothing to condemn in the Marquis. I merely said, he has not such an air of fashion as I have remarked
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in some men, who were much his inferiors in many other respects."

"His Lordship's boots were clean, you perhaps remarked, Sir," said Miss Murray, in a gay tone; "and he had neither a silk handkerchief round his neck, nor a quizzing-glass hanging at his button-hole. Besides, he did not stare us out of countenance; and was actually Goth enough to do more than nod his head, when he came into our pew, and when he bid us good-bye; therefore, his rank alone can make him tolerated in the present fashionable circles, I should suppose."

Charlotte joined in the general laugh her cousin's speech had occasioned, declaring that she gave the decided preference to the present freedom of manners, as she detested every thing that savoured of formality, or *de la vieille cour*; and she could not help thinking that the Marquis of Endermay had inherited a few of his maternal grandfather's antediluvian notions. The fact was, he had not seemed so

struck with her beauty as she had expected; and she had never heard him ranked among the dashing bucks of the day: and Charlotte Melbourne had often told her more unfashionable cousin, that she hoped, whenever she married, some dashing devil, who drove a barouche and four blood-horses, and a pair of spirited iron-grey tandem, in a knowing whiskey, would fall to her share. As for his moral character, she should never think of inquiring about it, if he was but a titled man, who could lose a few hundreds at a cut with a good grace, hit his antagonist at the distance of twelve paces in a duel, and allow her five thousand a-year pin-money.

Such was the jargon and notions she had picked up at one of the first boarding-schools in London, where the pestiferous influence of false refinement had taught her to consider a life of ostentation, folly, and insignificance, as the only one deserving of envy; and as she had not made that sudden impression upon our hero, which she

she had thought she must inevitably do in a country church, she set him down at once for a Goth, unworthy her notice. She, therefore, could not help remarking, while divesting herself of her gipsy-hat, that no young man of spirit, or who knew any thing of life, could endure the strange mode of life, report said the inhabitants of the Priory led.

“ You surely forget, Charlotte, that the Marquis is brother to Mr. and Miss Albany,” said her cousin.

“ And I think it a very great proof of his good sense,” resumed the Doctor, “ his thus kindly accommodating himself to what, like myself, he may deem excess of enthusiasm in Mr. Langhton.”

We shall not, however, pursue this conversation any further, as we may again introduce these ladies, and we wish to return to our hero, who was agreeably surprised by meeting his brother, soon after he had parted with the rector, who exclaimed, the moment he caught sight of him—“ I

was

was coming in search of you—we thought you were lost. You have not been to Hilton, have you? because the inmates of the cottage always spend Sunday with us.”

“ I did not leave home to pay any visits. I have been to your village church.”

“ Then, I dare say, you heard a very good sermon; for I have heard many people say Dr. Murray is an excellent preacher, and I know he is a very charitable good kind of a man. But did you see his daughter and niece? A’nt they very fine girls—particularly Miss Melbourne? she is prettier than Pauline, in my opinion—to be sure, she dresses a great deal more; and they say her father is very rich.”

“ Very possibly—but, pray, where did you get acquainted with her?”

“ No where: I never spoke to her in my born days; but I have met her on horseback with her uncle and cousin. The Doctor always touches his hat to me, but never speaks; and I cannot very well break the ice—though my mother and

Rosalie

Rosalie agree she is a very nice girl—so is Miss Murray; but she looks too grave for me—though she is their favourite, she is so highly spoken of in the village.”

“Then, I dare say, she is the most amiable character of the two; but, as you can never marry either with your grandfather’s consent, I think you had better not throw yourself in the way of temptation. Talking of that, I mean to ask Mr. Langhton to allow you to spend a month or six weeks with me in London, next spring. Can you, should he consent, make up your mind to leave Mademoiselle Pauline, as I shall not ask her to join the party?”

“She may go to the d-v-l, if I am but permitted to profit by your kind invitation. How I shall enjoy seeing London! faith, I will make myself amends for the privations I daily undergo at the Priory; I will make good use of my time, I warrant me.”

“Do not make too sure of visiting the metropolis,” rejoined the Marquis; “as I
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am very dubious whether Mr. Langhton will think you sufficiently discreet to be emancipated from his controul: however; my uncle and Lady Winifred mean to propose the matter to him. So do not drop any hint of my intention, at present, even to your friend Belthorpe."

"Not I, truly; I know he is often in a fever, for fear grandfather should think my education completed; therefore I am sure he would start difficulties, if he was not also invited. So mum's the word, for here are the gates, and in I must, since I am yet a prisoner, and not the only one within these walls, I am shrewdly of opinion—but the Padre is too cunning for B. and me. Sometime or other, I will tell you what I allude to; but I dare not, at present; as I swore a solemn oath to Belthorpe that I would not, while you were at the Priory: when we are in London, I shall not be tongue-tied."

"I shall never require any explanation of your meaning, Algernon. You are
sworn

sworn to secrecy, and God forbid that I should tempt you to perjure yourself! Therefore, as you value my regard, never again allude, even in the remotest way, to the subject," replied the Marquis, perfectly comprehending the hints he had dropped; and he would not have wished, situated as he was, to be supposed to know that there was any one confined over the Father's room.

Mr. Langhton was extremely happy to see the Marquis again, as he began to fear they had lost him, he said, adding—"You are already acquainted, Marquis, with Madame de La Tour and her daughter, who always spend their Sundays with us."

If Malcolm had not recollected the features of these ladies, he would hardly have recognised them in their grey stuff gowns, trimmed with black, and close caps; and their manners seemed as much altered as their dress, as they were now silent auditors, seldom joining in the conversation, and hardly ever raising their eyes; and
when,

when they did utter a few words, they generally conveyed an indirect compliment to the pious Mr. Langhton, who seemed perfectly their dupe. Lady William was nearly as silent as they were; and Rosalie never spoke but when addressed, and never, except by chance, to the guests, who were respectfully civil to his Lordship, but did not chuse to appear at all inclined to increase their intimacy with a soldier, and, of course, a man of the world.

More disgusted by their hypocrisy than he had before been with their levity, and in their openly encouraging his brother to break one of the commandments of the Romish church, which expressly forbids its members to eat flesh-meat on fast-days, the Marquis soon convinced them that he had no intention of repeating his visits to the cottage, since he was even more distant than they were, and, like his sister, never addressed them, except in answer to some direct question. Father Benedetto, who sat, as usual, with his eyes half-closed,

was

was nevertheless strictly scrutinizing the three guests; and appeared, to judge from his speeches, displeased at some part of Madame's conduct.

The summons to dinner seemed a relief to all present; and our hero was not sorry to see the old English sirloin appear at Mr. Langhton's table, with its usual companion, an excellent plumb-pudding. Little passed during the meal; the day prevented the Father from being loquacious; and after drinking a few glasses of wine, the chapel-bell summoned the party to vespers.

Our hero took a solitary stroll in the garden, while they were at prayers, revolving in his own mind, how he could possibly effect the liberation of the imprisoned youth, should he feel inclined to exert himself in his behalf, after he was acquainted with his story. At all events, he conceived he ought to procure him his freedom, after raising hopes to that effect; since what crime could he, at so early

early an age, have been guilty of, to deserve perpetual imprisonment? Impatiently, therefore, did he long for the promised manuscript; he was, therefore, not sorry to be summoned to tea, and was still more pleased, when the whole family, visitors and all, were once safe at chapel; since, on Sundays, Lady William generally made a point of attending vespers; and he had so strenuously insisted upon not being treated as a ceremonious guest, that she did not break through her established rule this evening, as she always wished to have her son and Pauline under her eyes; though she had frequently, with pleasure, remarked, that neither Father Benedetto, nor Madame, seemed to wish to encourage any intimacy between them. Belthorpe, she knew, was more complaisant: still her mind was comparatively at ease, as she knew her son stood in the greatest awe of the friar, with whom he was nevertheless a very great favourite, and from whom he met with more indulgence than any other.

either member of the family had ever done.

Our hero being, however, left to his own reflections, wishing to see Donald the moment he returned from the turret, walked up stairs into his own room; and though not naturally impatient, he thought every moment an age, till he made his appearance, when his countenance, before he spoke, convinced his lord, that he had succeeded to the utmost of his wishes; and the moment he had closed the door, he pulled a small roll of paper out of his pocket, saying—"Here it is, my Lord; and if its contents do but give you half the gratification the sight of me did the writer, I should not mind scaling his prison from the road, to bring you such another."

"You are sure all is safe, Donald," replied the scarcely less pleased Marquis; "you left every thing, I hope, exactly as you found them?"

"I am confident even the Father would
never

never suspect that any one has been in the lumber-room, much less so near his prisoner, who seems in such spirits it did my heart good to see him; and, as they say, 'the better day the better deed,' I am sure I could not have been better employed; since the poor young gentleman—(for I make no doubt he is a man of consequence, else the Father would never keep him thus confined)—but, as I was saying, he must now be convinced that we are not sporting with his feelings."

"God forbid I should be so cruel!" hastily rejoined our hero: "no, I am resolved to effect his liberation privately, if possible, if he is, as I suspect, an oppressed and injured man; and, at all events, the friar can have no right to keep him thus secluded. Therefore, if I am not absolutely convinced that he has been wrongfully confined, I will oblige the monk to prove why he has thus daringly violated the laws of Great Britain. But I can come to no determination till I have read what
the

the prisoner has written me; and I shall not enter upon his tale, till I retire for the night; so I shall now go down again. We shall probably retire early; and before to-morrow, I shall have made up my mind to how proceed;" unlocking his travelling writing-box, in which he deposited the packet, and taking out a twenty-pound note, gave it Donald, as a small return, he said, for the risk he had ran in the cause of humanity.

The valet's bow, in return for this present, like Corporal Trim's, upon a similar occasion, was more expressive of his gratitude than any speech he could have made; and our gratified hero returned into the parlour, where he was soon joined by the family. The *emigrées* had departed under the care of Mr. Belthorpe, the moment vespers were over; the tutor did not return to supper; and, at the accustomed hour of ten, the party separated as usual; and our hero being extremely anxious to peruse his manuscript, merely suffered Donald to
pull

pull off his boots, and make up the fire, before he dismissed him, with orders to come to him the moment the family went to mass in the morning, as he should, ere then, have come to some resolution how to proceed with the poor captive.

No sooner was his Lordship left alone, than he unrolled the manuscript he had received; and as it was very legibly written in a neat Italian hand, and in that language, he found he should have no difficulty, as he feared would have been the case, in decyphering it. We shall therefore begin our next chapter with the captive's tale, as we wish to interest our readers in his favour.

CHAP. VII.

“THE earliest recollection I have of my childhood is, that I was the inmate of a vinedresser’s cottage, who rented a large vineyard, belonging to a neighbouring monastery of Carthusian Friars. An old woman, who was either my mother or nurse, (she styled herself the former), had the care of me; and we boarded with the family of Ludovico, the name of the tenant of the vineyard, which was in the immediate vicinity of Milan.

“My mother was, I soon learned, very much patronized by the prior and monks belonging to the convent I have already

mentioned, as she was their sempstress, and frequently executed their private commissions; for I am sorry to say, that, as I grew up, I was convinced, by sad experience, that sanctity does not always dwell in monasteries.

“ But, to return to myself, as I wish to be as concise as possible.—At an early age, I was taken into this convent, where I was taught to write and read, by the Prior himself; and when old enough, I used to attend upon him, while he said mass. He was by no means an ill-tempered man; and as I had never felt any great affection for my mother, who died soon after I was turned of ten years of age, I soon attached myself to the Padre Antonio; as I ought to have observed, I was never permitted to leave the convent, after once I had entered the great gates; nor did I ever, from that time, see any member of Ludovico's family, though I make no doubt they now and then came to the grate; but all access to that was strictly forbidden me. Therefore, thought

though I had a much larger range, I was as much a prisoner as I have been since I became an inhabitant of Langhton Priory; with this difference, in Italy I had not only the free run of the garden, but I knew that I resided in the convent of the Spirito Sancto, near Milan; whereas, till you, my noble friend, gave me the information, I knew not even the name of the owner of the house I now inhabit.

“I shall not tire you with a detail of the monotonous life I led at the Italian monastery, though I certainly enjoyed a sort of negative happiness there, which I have never experienced in England; still I was often anxious, as I grew up, to know who were my parents; never having been absolutely convinced that I was Veronica’s son, as she was a very old woman, and never had appeared to entertain any great degree of affection for me. Ludovico had, besides, often hinted, in my hearing, that there was some mystery annexed to my birth, which she carefully concealed; and

the monks, when I questioned them, were by no means agreed respecting me. Some told me, that I had been taken into the convent out of charity; others, who were not fond of the Prior, declared their belief that he received a very handsome sum yearly for my board; and there were some who did not scruple to hint, that I was the Padre Antonio's son, by a lady whom he had formerly confessed. Which of them were in the right, I cannot take upon me to say; though I cannot suppose I was the Prior's son—no father could have acted so treacherously by a child as he has done by me; yet, to do him justice, he spared no pains upon my education; that is, he made me a proficient in the dead languages, and suffered me to read Homer, Virgil, &c.; though he frequently gave me to understand, that I must take my vows at a proper age. In consequence, I was obliged to wade through the voluminous writings of the fathers of the church, which I thought very dry and uninteresting, when
compared

compared to Cicero's Orations, Tully's Offices, and other Pagan writers, as the Padre styled them: yet, to my great joy, he allowed me free access to the library; and some of my pleasantest hours were spent in poring over the Greek folios it contained; from the perusal of which, I certainly did not imbibe any very correct idea of the present race of Italians; and the monks were certainly very degenerate characters, when compared to my favourite ancient Romans.

“ I need not inform you, my noble friend, that the French revolution soon extended its baneful effects to the monks far beyond the Alps; and the greatest alarm was entertained, in 1794, for the safety of the Catholic church in general. Masses were daily said in our convent; I believe, for the ensuing six months, the monks were really devout. But, as you must be infinitely better acquainted than I was, even at the time, with the rapid progress the French armies were making in

Italy, at the period I mention, I shall only say, that it was seriously debated among the monks, whether they ought not to seek their safety in flight, and to take refuge in other convents of the same order, in those Italian states that were as yet at peace with the French republic.

“ How the generality of the fathers disposed of themselves, I cannot pretend to say; but while they were all in this state of alarm, the Prior called me, one morning, into his cell, and told me, that having long foreseen that he should be obliged to become a fugitive, if he wished to preserve his life, he had written to a relation he had in England, from whom he had just received a very kind answer, offering him and any of his friends a safe asylum in that country—‘ Thither, therefore, I am resolved to bend my steps,’ he went on; ‘ and I mean to make you the companion of my journey. My brethren may remain here, or follow my example, as they think most expedient; since I shall not inform
them

them of my intentions, as I wish to travel unmolested; of course, I shall throw off my monk's dress: you can have no objection to my plan, since all places must be alike to you; and you will enjoy infinitely more freedom in England than you ever did here, as there are no convents there.'

" You may suppose what my answer was, my noble friend, as I thought I must be happy, if once emancipated from my prison. The monk had a sufficient sum of money by him to defray our expences upon the road, and his friend was to provide for his and my future wants; nevertheless, he thought fit to make free with all the finest jewels belonging to the convent treasury (which had been the offerings of many pious devotees to the shrines of various saints in our chapel), and with all the gold plate; alledging, in excuse for what he would, of course, have deemed sacrilege in any other person, that, if he

did not secure these valuables, the French would. I thought he acted very differently to what my favourite Romans would have done upon a similar occasion ; but I knew it would be in vain to alledge their example, to deter him from committing what I thought a theft ; therefore, suffice it to say, that we departed at dusk that evening.

“ Ludovico, who had long been the Prior’s agent in all his private business, had a carriage in waiting for us, in which we proceeded very rapidly to Genoa, where we drove to the house of a friend of Padre Antonio’s, who received us very civilly, and with whom we remained, till we embarked on board a merchant-vessel, bound to Bristol.

“ Unfortunately, I only understood Greek, Latin, and Italian, and no soul on board the ship understood either. The Padre did not seem sorry that I was thus effectually prevented from informing any
one

one who we were, or whence we came; he even prohibited me from endeavouring to converse by signs with the sailors.

“ After a pleasant, though tedious voyage, we were landed safe at Bristol, I presume, as I know the vessel was bound thither, and it seemed a very large town. I only know that we sailed up a narrow river, for some miles, before the ship was moored, nearly in the centre of the city. I had formed a very high opinion of England, as we glided slowly along, between rocks, woods, and verdant lawns; and I was particularly struck with a sort of town we passed, which reminded me of Italy, just before we reached Bristol, where we took up our abode at an inn, where we remained five days; during which time, the Padre would not suffer me to stir out, for fear I should lose myself, he said; and our room only looked into a back court—therefore I grew heartily tired of my confinement.

“ The Prior wrote, the day after his arrival, to his friend, and chose to carry the letter himself to the post-office; still I attributed the restraint he imposed upon me, to his regard for me, not presuming he could have any other reason for keeping me so close a prisoner; and I had sense enough to know that I was ignorant and inexperienced enough to warrant his caution; since, independent of my never having stirred without the walls of a monastery since I was a mere child, I was not, if the Padre was to be believed, above sixteen when we reached England.

“ But, on the fifth day after our arrival at Bristol, the expected answer to the Padre's letter came to hand; and he informed me, that we were invited to take up our abode, for the present, in the house of an English nobleman, a Catholic, with whom his friend Padre Martini resided; and he meant to proceed thither the next morning, as we were at some distance from the gentleman's

gentleman's we were going to visit, who had inclosed a note in the letter to defray our travelling expences.

“ The following day, therefore, we left Bristol, in a post-chaise; this my travelling companion told me, in answer to my inquiry, informing me that he had a list of the names of all the towns we were to pass through during our journey, which I found very pleasant, as we were in the height of summer, and did not travel all night.

“ On the third evening, about dusk, we drove into a very large populous town; and upon reaching the inn, where, I rather understood, we were to spend the night, we found the Prior's friend, Padre Martini, as he calls himself, but whom you, doubtless with more truth, style the Padre Benedetto, who seemed delighted to see us both; and I was highly gratified by the cordiality with which he welcomed me to England, little suspecting that him, and my early protector, meant, it should appear, to immure

me for life, in the apartment in which you found me—and why they should thus keep me confined, I cannot divine, though it may be supposed that I have often seriously reflected upon their strange and cruel conduct towards me; since I solemnly declare, that I never, to my knowledge, injured any man; nor was I ever; as far as I am acquainted with the meaning of the word, guilty of any crime. Why need the Prior have brought me from Italy, merely to render me completely miserable? Would to Heaven he had left me behind! I could but have fallen a sacrifice to the French, and death would have been far preferable to the life I lead. Excuse this digression: I resume my story.

“The two old gentlemen having conversed for some time in a very low voice, at one extremity of a very large room, while I sat at the other, Father Benedetto, as you style him, started up, declaring it was half-past-nine, and he must be going,
having

having promised to return home that evening. The Padre Antonio complained of fatigue, and, as his friend seemed unwilling to return alone at so late an hour, proposed my accompanying him, promising to be with us by the family breakfast hour, the next morning. Of course, I made no objection; therefore, between ten and eleven, in a fine star-light night, in July, I set forward with my new friend.

“ Very little passed between us, during a drive of an hour or more, if I except the Father’s congratulations upon our having reached England in safety. At last, however, after a long silence, he called to the driver to stop at a style by the road side, telling me, we would walk across the fields, as, having made it so late, he did not like to drive up to the door, for fear of disturbing the family; and, I fancy, he made pretty near the same excuse to the postillion.

“ Having been riding so much of late, I was not sorry to have an opportunity
of

of stretching my legs; my small stock of baggage I had left with the Prior; therefore, leaping out of the chaise, I followed my new friend across several fields, and then down a narrow road, at one extremity of which stood his patron's house, he told me; and when I caught a glimpse of the building, it strongly reminded me of the monastery I had so lately quitted. The Father laughed at the remark, but did not chuse to inform me, that the mansion in sight had once been adapted to similar purposes, which I have learned from your kind explanatory letter, my generous friend.

“ At last, we reached a small door; by which, he said, we would enter, not to create any noise or disturbance. Having cautiously unlocked it, he made me a sign to go in; and though the painted windows merely emitted a faint glimmering of light, I soon perceived that we were in a chapel. The Father having allowed me full time to look round me, as he both
locked,

locked, barred, and bolted the door by which we had entered, he then led me towards a second, which having opened, he pulled a bell, and, in a few moments, Francisco, if that is his name, came running down stairs, and with a light; and we proceeded into the Father's apartment, where he again welcomed me to England, offering me some refreshments; but I was more inclined to go to rest than to eat or drink. I was, therefore, shewn into a room directly over the Padre's, which seemed to have been prepared for my reception, and I had certainly no reason to complain of my bed; but when I awoke in the morning, I was astonished to perceive that my apartment had only a skylight, as you have seen, and had certainly, in many respects, the appearance of a prison; still I entertained no fears of its proving one.

“ Having dressed myself, I felt my way down the narrow winding staircase I had ascended the preceding night. I was rather surprised, upon finding the door leading

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ing into the Father's apartment fastened on the outside, and cased with iron within. I knocked, but no one answered, for some time; at last, however, I heard approaching footsteps, and knocked louder than before, when the door was opened by the Father himself, who asked me how I had slept, and whether I did not want my breakfast? adding—'Your apartment was fitted up for a lunatic, and I hope, in future, you will consider yourself as one, since, whether or not, you are not to stir beyond its boundaries.'

"I believe I was silly enough to laugh, presuming he was merely amusing himself at my expence; but I soon found, he was in earnest, as he assured me the Prior had set out on his return to Italy, that very morning, having merely come to England to deliver me into his hands. In vain did I request to be informed why I was to be thus cruelly treated? all he chose to say was, that it was necessary I should be confined, on account of my family; assuring me

me that I should want for nothing but liberty ; and to me, who had been all my life buried in a cloister, that could be of little comparative value. I should have plenty of good books to read ; and I might sit and fancy myself the son of some very great man—of a monarch, if I chose, who did not chuse that I should succeed him ; since he never should inform me to whom I owed my existence ; he had sworn not to do so, and he should not perjure himself to satisfy my curiosity. I was, as he had told me, under the roof of his patron, who was privy to my arrival in England, and who approved of my being secluded from every eye.

“ Thus did he go on, keeping me upon the stairs, at the bottom of which he stood, till, forgetting that I was a mere stripling, and very unable to cope with him, I endeavoured to force my way past him, meaning to make my escape, without reflecting that I was pennyless, in a foreign land, and neither knew who I
was.

was, nor which way to turn. The Father, however, easily frustrated my intention, by presenting a pistol to my head, and desiring me instantly to return up stairs, or he would have me chained to the floor, and keep me upon bread and water, for a month. Francisco also, armed, came to his assistance; and as I had no weapon to act upon the defensive, and felt that life was still sweet, I returned to my prison; and from that time, I have never even descended the stairs; though I have sometimes doubted whether they dare have laid violent hands on me. Still, whither could I have gone, had I succeeded in escaping? the family, I dare say, suppose me a lunatic, as it must be known I am in the house, I should presume; yet, at times, I am inclined to think no one is in the secret but the Padre and his man.

“ Once a-month, the former visits me, and exhorts me to confess my sins; this I have absolutely refused to do, to my jailor, as I style him; he is, therefore, convinced,

vinced, he says, that I am really a lunatic, since no other would live in such a state of reprobation. I, in reply, tell him, he may have the satisfaction of rendering me so, in time; often inquiring, what is to become of me, should I survive him? and I know, at times, I have probed his conscience pretty severely, since, of late, he has thrown out hints, that, perhaps, he might be inclined to liberate me, upon certain conditions; not that he supposes that I should object to taking a solemn oath, never to mention having been confined in England, and he might, in that case, send me out to the West Indies, or, perhaps, procure me a situation in Ireland, in a Catholic family, as a fugitive Italian, escaped from a monastery abroad; but he has never yet come to the point, though I am well convinced he now wishes I had remained in Italy; indeed, I rather suppose, it answered the Prior's purpose to bring me away with him, since it was certainly not the good will he bore me, which induced

induced him to make me his travelling companion. When heartily tired of the tedium of the life I lead, I have advised the Padre to make away with me at once; but that, I am sure, he dare not do, or he would long since have rid the world of such a useless being.

“ I have now, my generous friend, as I hope to be forgiven for my sins of omission and commission, in the next world, related all I know of myself, from my earliest infancy down to the present time. Could you contrive to liberate me, and put me in a way to earn my bread in an honest manner, you would make me the happiest of men, and my gratitude would be unbounded; since, should I succeed in getting away, the Padre should prove by whose authority he acts, before he confined me again—yet, how dare I expect that a total stranger will run, perhaps, a very great risk, merely to oblige me!

“ Still your cheering promises lead me to hope you will, at least, make an attempt

tempt to rescue a fellow-creature from such a state of bondage. At all events, you may depend upon my discretion, and that I will carefully conceal the writing-materials you so generously provided me with. I am sure I need not add, that I shall be all impatience till I again see your servant—and thus concludes your much obliged and truly grateful Juliano—such is the name I have borne from my infancy; that of my family I never heard.”

CHAP. VIII.

“ I WILL liberate thee, or perish in the attempt,” mentally exclaimed our hero, after finishing Juliano’s affecting narrative; when,

when, as it grew late, he hastily undressed, and threw himself into bed, his head and heart full of the poor captive, whom he thought must be a man of some consequence, whom it behoved Father Antonio to keep concealed; for which purpose, he had brought him with him from Italy; and his bribes had induced Father Benedetto to take charge of the unfortunate youth; Mr. Langhton's bigotry having allowed him to turn his house into a prison, since he could not suppose he was aware of the exact situation of the captive; indeed, he rather suspected that he had been given to suppose he was insane.

He felt very unwilling to create any bustle at the Priory, else he might insist upon having the matter explained, and declare himself openly the protector of this oppressed young man; but he thought he should, perhaps, inflict a greater punishment upon the friar, could he secretly release his captive; and after leaving him for some time a prey to suspense, Giuliano
might

might file a bill in chancery against him, to force either him, or his friend, the Prior, to declare who he was; and he should feel it his duty to stand forward in his behalf, upon this and every occasion, as he was resolved not to let the matter drop, till he had fathomed the mystery which hung over his birth.

As for his being a natural son of the Prior's, that was improbable in the extreme, since he would, in that case, have left him in Italy, most probably; at all events, it would have been useless to confine him. No! he must, like the celebrated Iron Mask, be a person of no small consequence; since, doubtless, both the Prior and the Padre were extremely well paid for keeping the secret, and for keeping him in such total ignorance of every circumstance that might enable him to form any conjectures likely to enable him to plan his escape; though, situated as he was, as he justly observed, he must be insane, were he to make the attempt. But
with

with his and Donald's assistance, he thought he might succeed in outwitting the treacherous old Italian; and he particularly admired his spirit, in refusing to confess to the old rascal, who was, indeed, a true Jesuit.

Thus he laid, reflecting and revolving plans for Julianio's escape, till the bell, as usual, summoned the family to matins; soon after which, he forgot himself; and Donald, who had not slept much better, joined him, the moment he heard Alger-non and Belthorpe go down stairs; when our hero briefly recapitulated the heads of Julianio's story, asking the attentive valet, whether it would be possible to liberate him privately, and without creating any bustle? since, let what would be the consequence, he was resolved to remove him from his present abode.

"I had already arranged a plan, which I will now submit to your Lordship's better judgment," resumed the valet, "since you are resolved to befriend the prisoner."

"I am

“ I am determined to do so, at every risk; though I should greatly prefer getting him off unknown to the friar; and I will provide for him, and assert his rights, when once he is free. So let me hear your scheme.”

“ I dare say your Lordship will improve upon it, though it has cost me some hours’ sleep to arrange it. The frame of the sky-light is, you already know, iron, and he cannot even get his head through the single pane that opens; but I think, that by the means of aquafortis, in a few days, I can sufficiently corrode the iron to make it bend, if not break, where I please; and I will be bound to get out a few panes of glass without noise—or should I break one, by placing his blankets under the spot, it will not create any disturbance; and I am convinced, with a proper instrument, I shall be able, after having corroded it, to wrench a sufficient opening in the iron frame, to admit of the prisoner’s getting out.”

“ So far, so good,” resumed the Marquis; “ but, pray, how is he to descend into the road from such a height, as it will be impossible to get him out through the house ? ”

“ That I am aware of, my Lord; but I think I can make a rope-ladder, which will enable him to descend in safety from the turret, as I shall be with him, of course, when he makes the attempt, and can assist him in making good his footing, in the first instance; and I will be bound to secure the ladder against slipping; therefore, if he has any courage, I make no doubt of landing him very safely in the road.”

“ Your plan is certainly very feasible; but, for God’s sake! let us take care, that in our anxiety to liberate this young man, we are not the occasion of his breaking his neck. Besides, it will not be sufficient to get him without these walls, we must also provide him with a guide and an asylum, as I am resolved to assert his claims, when once he is at liberty; yet I do not
chuse

chuse to mention my intention to any of my friends, at present, since they might condemn my knight-errantry, and I should not wish to act in direct opposition to their advice. Besides, were I to send him into Scotland, it might get wind; and I am convinced, that the Father must be taken unawares, to induce him to confess; therefore, I think he had better proceed immediately to London. But then, how must he travel, and with whom? I cannot send you with him, and I don't chuse to let any of the other servants know of my intentions."

"Shall I write to my brother, my Lord? you may always command his services; and I am sure he will feel highly honoured by being made privy to your humane intentions."

"A very good thought, Donald—your brother may be depended upon; therefore, write to him at all events, to come down to Manchester (where you will give him the meeting) upon receipt of your letter.

Enter into no explanations—reserve all those till you meet: his wife can manage his business during his absence, I presume: at all events, I will make him amends for the trouble I shall give him.”

“ I am sure, my Lord, he will deem it a pleasure to serve you.”

“ I know he is a good soul; and perhaps he can accommodate the fugitive for a short time.”

“ I dare say he will be able to do so; and with your leave, my Lord, I will ride over to Manchester, and put my letter in the post there, and buy the ropes I shall want; since there is no fear of the prisoner throwing cold water upon our scheme.”

“ I will write him our intentions, when I come up to dress, and you shall carry him my letter at the usual hour; as I would have you set out upon your jaunt, immediately after I have finished my toilette: you can dine and bait your horse at Manchester; and as I shall not go out to-day,
except

except on foot, you may ride Glow-worm, (the Marquis's own horse); he will soon carry you thither and back again. Tell the servants, you are going to Preston, to make some purchases for me; as we cannot be too careful—for Jesuits are renowned for their skill in plotting, and for discovering those formed against them. Francisco is doubtless always upon the watch; therefore, I repeat, we cannot be too cautious."

Donald promised to adhere, in every particular, to his lord's instructions, as he felt nearly as anxious as he did, to liberate the victim of the Father's treachery; resolving to write immediately to his brother, who had once lived in the family, but having married the daughter of a man who kept a snuff-shop, in Wells-street, Oxford-road, he had, some few years prior to the late Marquis of Endermay's death, succeeded him in business, and was now doing extremely well, and owner of a very good house, part of which he always let furnished;

nished; therefore, our hero thought that the young Italian would, at least for the present, be very comfortably situated under his roof; and sincerely did he wish, as he descended the great stairs, that he was safely arrived in London, as he dreaded something intervening to mar all his schemes.

As the family expected the promised visit from the party at Highwood, they merely strolled in the garden, after breakfast; and about twelve, the Earl and Countess of Algernon, Lady Winifred, and Lord Dunluce, were announced and shewn into the great parlour. Never had Mr. Langhton been more gratified. Lady William was extremely pleased with the Countess, and infinitely flattered by her politeness towards her and her daughter; as her elegant, easy, fashionable manners, formed a perfect contrast to the more formal Lady Winifred's, whose dress did not appear to have undergone any material alteration, since she had last visited the Priory, as she
still,

still, in defiance of fashion, sported a black lace hood, and a short apron.

Lord Dunluce was upon his best behaviour, and merely used his quizzing-glass when examining the portraits which decorated the room; still he fell very far short of Lady William's expectations; and Rosalie saw still less to admire in him, though she agreed, when he was gone, that he seemed very good-natured, but she feared he would never be so amiable a man as his father appeared to be.

The necessary forms of introduction being over, Lady Winifred said she came purposely to invite Mr. Langhton, Lady William, and Mr. and Miss Albany, to dine at Highwood on that day week—"I presume," she added, "it would be a mere compliment, Sir," turning to the Padre, "to ask your company. But I shall be happy to see you, Mr. Belthorpe."

The Father bowed an assent to her supposition; and Mr. Langhton hoped she would excuse him, as various reasons, his

age among the rest, rendered him very averse to leave home. His daughter and grandchildren would be perfectly safe under the care of the Marquis of Endermay, whom, he presumed, her Ladyship meant to include in her invitation.

“ I mean to do more, my good Sir, as I mean to make his Lordship a prisoner at Highwood, since my nephew proposes leaving me in the course of a fortnight; therefore, you must allow me to enjoy a few days of Lord Endermay’s company, previous to his leaving Lancashire.”

“ I can only say, we shall all sincerely grieve, when the Marquis leaves the Priory; yet we cannot be so selfish as to wish him to prolong his visit, situated as he is with respect to your Ladyship. We must, therefore, content ourselves with hoping that he will again favour us with his company, whenever^{er} he can make it convenient.”

The Marquis made a very polite reply to this speech; and Lady William, in her
own

own and her children's name, promised to wait upon the spinster at the appointed time; Belthorpe, of course, agreeing to accompany them to Highwood, having been extremely flattered by being included in the invitation.

When chocolate had been brought in, which accorded with Lady Winifred's *politesse de la vielle cour*, her Ladyship, while sipping her cup, (having previously bestowed her tribute of admiration upon the rich old Nankin china, in which it was served), said, addressing Mr. Langhton—
“Though I have, of late years, like yourself, my good Sir, seldom stirred from home, I positively mean to spend a month or six weeks in London, next spring. My ward is now in her nineteenth year, and ought to be introduced at St. James's; and as, I suppose, you mean your grandchildren should at least make their appearance there, I shall request that Miss Rosalie Albany may be allowed to join my party.

Possibly you, Lady William, may have no objection to again visiting the metropolis, which is strangely altered and enlarged, since we were last there ; however, if you are inclined to take such a journey, we shall make a nice *partie quarrée*."

"As it is quite as necessary that my brother should be presented as my sister," hastily exclaimed our hero, "I hope Mr. Langhton will not object to his taking the same opportunity to pay me a visit."

"I only wish he possessed your stability, my Lord," was Mr. Langhton's indirect reply.

Lady William assured the old lady, that could any thing have induced her to leave the Priory for any length of time, it would have been the recent proposal—"But, though I must beg leave to decline joining your Ladyship's party," she went on, "if my father has no objection, I shall very thankfully place my daughter under your Ladyship's care ; and whether or not,
I shal

I shall ever feel myself greatly obliged for so considerate and kind a proposal in her behalf."

"I am not so much the enemy of Rosalie, my dear," replied the gratified Mr. Langhton, "as to start any objections to her accompanying Lady Winifred, and her cousin, to London," glancing his eyes towards the Padre, as much as to say—"Have I done right?"

"It is time she was introduced into life," gravely resumed the friar; "and while under the care of Lady Winifred Albany, she will enjoy every advantage the most anxious of her friends could desire."

Lady Winifred, to whom praise was always acceptable, thought the monk both a polite and sensible man, and certainly returned him the compliment he had paid her with interest.

"And may I hope, Sir, to be favoured with my brother's company, when my sister visits London?" asked our hero, in a friendly tone of intreaty.

“ Or have you a higher opinion of my prudence, my good Sir?” gaily exclaimed Lord Algernon; “ had you rather my grandson should be my inmate? As his guardian, I am certainly intitled to such a mark of your confidence; and I can assure you, that I will keep as strict a watch over my nephew, as I have ever done over my son.”

“ Your Lordship does both him and me honour,” was the reply; “ but as I mean Mr. Belthorpe should accompany Algernon to town, since I do not object to his going thither, I trust that neither you, nor the Marquis of Endermay, will feel offended at their going into private lodgings, as my grandson must keep good hours, and attend as usual to his religious duties. Lady Winifred will, I hope, allow him to have frequent access to his sister, whom he can accompany to mass, and the other Catholic services.”

“ He will always be a welcome guest, wherever I take up my abode, Mr. Langhton,”

ton," replied Lady Winifred; "and I should have requested Mr. Albany might have been my inmate, if my ward did not reside with me."

"And we must content ourselves, Marquis," said the Earl, "(since I highly approve of Mr. Langhton's arrangement), with frequently seeing our young relative, during his stay in London, as we merely wish to render ourselves useful to him, but not to interfere with the plans of his friends."

The Marquis spoke to the same effect; and the visitors departed, rejoicing in having succeeded far better than they had hoped with the old Catholic. Lady Winifred expressing a hope, that she should see Lord Endermay during the course of the week, he promised to look in upon her; and, as soon as they were gone, went to his toilette, feeling very happy at being thus relieved from all responsibility respecting his brother, during his proposed stay in town, as he was but too well convinced that he would, as he often boasted, make

make himself ample amends for his present strict confinement. He did not, however, communicate these reflections to Donald, but furnished him with a very plausible excuse for his supposed jaunt to Preston; and having dressed *a la hâte*, he dismissed him, after renewing his former cautions, and desiring him to make every necessary purchase to facilitate the prisoner's evasion, to whom he wrote a short letter, explaining how they proposed to act, and what were his future plans; desiring he would have an answer ready against the following evening, since if he could improve upon their notion, they should think themselves obliged to him.

While our hero was thus employed, Mr. Langhton and the Father were closeted in the *scriptorium*, or confessional-room, where they were secure from interruption, and where they always discussed matters of importance. Now, perhaps, had Lord Algernon, and the hero of our tale, known that the friar had long wished that both

Algernon

Algernon and Rosalie might be allowed to visit London, and to associate with their father's family, they would not have been so anxious to second his intention; as they were not aware, that he hoped Rosalie would either, like her mother, marry a Protestant, or that, when once she emerged from the Priory, she would imbibe such a dislike to it, that she would afford him an opportunity of advising her name to be omitted in her grandfather's will, since he made no doubt of her coming in for the greater part of her mother's savings, and he wished her brother to be the old gentleman's sole heir; of course, he did not suppose that his London journey would be attended with any of the consequences he hoped would follow Rosalie's introduction into the *beau monde*, since he certainly entertained a much higher opinion of Algernon than he deserved. He had, therefore, adroitly sounded his patron upon the subject, both before and since Lord Endermay had become their inmate; having

no doubt, as he had told Mr. Langhton, but the Marquis would invite his brother to return the visit in town, and a flat refusal would not only affront the young peer, but might perhaps prove very inimical to Mr. Albany's interest. To avoid, therefore, offending this youthful favourite of fortune, it had been agreed, that he should be informed his brother should be permitted to visit London, in company with Mr. Belthorpe; as they might lodge in the vicinity of that saint upon earth, the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon, from whom they could learn nothing but good.

Thus, therefore, have we accounted for Mr. Langhton's having so readily consented to his grandson's visiting "that sink of sin," as he denominated London; since he fancied he had taken every precaution to prevent his principles being perverted, as he fancied Belthorpe was a very good man, and would, besides, be ably seconded by the worthy Bishop; and as he knew that Algernon was already more than of age, he
feared.

feared that had he refused his consent to his leaving the Priory, he might have been spirited up by his uncle and brother to have rebelled, and he did not think he should survive his changing his religion, which might follow his first overt-act of rebellion against his authority, as he might enter the army, or be otherwise supported by his rich brother, who, should he feel himself affronted, might, the friar had suggested, go any lengths to be revenged; he, therefore, sincerely congratulated his worthy patron, when they were safe closeted, upon having so ably planned matters, as to have succeeded in pleasing every body, giving him all the honour of having done so, when, in fact, the superstitious weak-minded old man had long been a mere puppet in his hands, and the humble echo of his thoughts; therefore, no one chuckled more upon this occasion than the artful ex-Jesuit, who had secrets and plans of which his patron was not at all aware, though he fancied he was as un-

reserved

reserved in his communications as he, Mr. Langhton, had always been.

Various reasons had induced him to connive at Belthorpe's introduction, and subsequent residence at the Priory, as their acquaintance had been of long standing, though they had met as strangers in Lancashire. An emigrant priest, who would have assisted his greatest foe to rob his greatest friend, had the latter come up to his price, had readily undertaken to introduce the fugitive Belthorpe to the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon, who, infinitely too good himself to suspect others of artifice, and having a very great esteem for the English, had readily, after having heard the lamentable tale the *ci-devant* confessor had told him, given him letters to the Padre Benedetto, and to Mr. Langhton, (whom he considered as saints upon earth), as he was going into Lancashire.

Thus recommended, he was received as a martyr to the French revolution, at the Priory; and as he had been acquainted
with

with Madame de La Tour in France, who had preceded him into the country, his account of her greatly raised her in Mr. Langhton's estimation; and as he continued very subservient to the Father-director, he was still in great favour with his patron, and the sworn friend of his pupil, whom he had insensibly totally alienated from the monk, whom he never scrupled to hold up to the ridicule of Algernon, and whose real regard for him, he attributed to the most interested motives; since, in fact, he both envied and hated the Padre, with whom he was nevertheless upon the most social terms; and as he had succeeded in rendering his pupil nearly as great a hypocrite as he was himself, he appeared the more obsequious, and the more attached to the old Italian, in proportion as he grew to fear and dislike him.

Lady William had not been so completely his dupe as the Father was, as she had more than once seen him make faces at

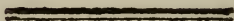
at him, when he fancied himself unperceived, accompanied by gestures indicative of his contempt for him, which had greatly shocked her; since, though she did not, like her father, fancy that the monk, had he remained in Italy, would have been canonized after his death, and enrolled among the already numerous legend of Romish saints, much less did she expect miracles would be wrought at his tomb, yet she thought him a much better character than Belthorpe—possibly, had she been in all his secrets, she might have been of a different opinion; but that not being the case, it was by no means extraordinary she should give him the preference, though she was not, like Mr. Langhton, absolutely blind to his failings; and as the Padre was very anxious to be upon good terms with her, if she condescended to hint her wishes to him, he always, in appearance at least, conformed to them.

She was, therefore, extremely hurt to perceive that her son secretly despised him,

him, and the more so, as he was continually extolling him to the skies; nay, often did he out-Herod Mr. Langhton, when dwelling upon his superior sanctity; yet she dared not open the friar's eyes, as she knew not what might be the consequence of her thus proclaiming her son's failings, to whom she privately spoke her mind pretty freely, and he endeavoured to persuade her she had mistaken his meaning. Her lectures had, however, had the good effect to put him more upon his guard, and Belthorpe had not failed to enforce her advice very strenuously; therefore, he was more than ever apparently devoted to the friar, though his dislike of him had increased, since Lady William had taken him to task about him; and he now frequently prayed for his speedy release from his mundane cares, and never failed to drink a good journey to him, wherever he was bound, in his last private glass, Belthorpe generally pledging him, and both forming

ing

ing many resolutions, which were all to be put in practice when his head was laid low.



CHAP. IX.

WE will now return to Donald, who, mounted on Glow-worm, soon reached Manchester, and having alighted at the first inn he came to, he put up his horse, and ordered something for dinner, to which he had but just sat down, when a stage-coach drove into the yard; and, upon inquiry, he found that it came in every day from London, at nearly the same hour, and started from thence every morning at five.

five. He therefore added a postscript to the letter he had already written his brother, in which he desired him, if possible, to come down by this very coach, upon receipt of his letter, as it left London in the evening, he understood, merely taking the lead of the mail. At all events, he wrote him, he should expect to find a letter at the Post-office, Manchester, (since he forbid his franking it, as usual, to his lord), if any thing prevented him from undertaking the journey, as he should come thither, in hopes of meeting him, on Friday; and had his own freedom, nay, his life, depended upon his brother's exertions, he could not have written more to the purpose.

Having, however, dispatched his letter, he set out to make his purchases, and soon procured such tools as he required, and a plentiful supply of aquafortis. The rope he had packed in the smallest compass imaginable, and had had it sewed up in a packing-mat; still it formed too large a bundle,

bundle, he thought, to carry into the Priory; but, as it was quite dusk when he reached the garden-wall, by standing upon the saddle, as the horse was as gentle as he was spirited, he made shift to throw it over; feeling convinced that he should be able to fumble it out in the dark, when all the family were at chapel, and he dare not run the risk of bringing it in openly.

Having delivered his horse to the groom, he hurried home, where he arrived between six and seven, and merely desired one of the servants to let his master know that he was returned from Preston, but had not been able to meet with what he wanted. The Marquis perfectly understood his meaning, therefore merely replied—"I did not suppose he would: I dare say I shall be obliged to send to Edinburgh, after all;" but entered into no further explanation; of course, none was required; nor had any one the least suspicion of the real errand Donald had been upon, whose first care, after the family were gone to chapel,

chapel, (Lady William alone remaining with our hero), was to secure his rope, which he easily found; and having conveyed it into his own room, locked it up in a trunk belonging to his lord's post-chaise, which he had previously emptied; resolving never to work at his ladder but by night, that he might never be surprised, while so employed; his night-lamp would afford him all the light he required, and he was determined to have all in readiness against his brother came.

Having locked up his cord and his various tools, he hastened to deliver his lord's welcome letter to the prisoner, who was impatiently expecting him, and seemed transported with joy, when he found that measures were actually taking for his release. Donald dared not make any stay with him, though he seized the opportunity to drop some of his aquafortis upon the iron frame-work, in the direction where he wished to make it yield, the prisoner assisting him with his light, and making

him every encouraging sign, likely to have induced a less humane man to have persevered in the attempt; but after promising to see him again, the ensuing evening, he cautiously retraced his steps, and walked down into Ashton's room, to await his return from chapel.

While he had been thus busily employed, our hero remained *tête-à-tête* with Lady William, who expressed her thanks for the kind invitation he had given his brother; adding—"I know I am also indebted to you for Lady Winifred's polite attention to my daughter, as her triumphant glances at you convinced me that you were the instigator of her wish to introduce Rosalie into the *beau monde*."

"You positively do not do the good lady justice, my dear Madam—the idea absolutely originated in herself; and I own I was agreeably surprised at Mr. Langhton's ready acquiescence with our wishes, though it was certainly very politic."

"And your Lordship may have heard
that

that the *ci-dexant* Jesuits were never supposed to be deficient in policy. But while we are alone, suffer me to request that you would caution Algernon against making too free with the bottle, on Thursday, as I know he is rather fond of wine, and he has very little guard over his tongue when he has drank an extra glass, which he has now and then contrived to do at home."

That Malcolm readily credited, as he made no doubt Belthorpe and him frequently made themselves amends in drinking, for their scanty meals on fast-days. He, however, promised to watch over him at Preston; and she was proceeding to enter into several details respecting Belthorpe, whom, she owned, she wished did not stand so high in Mr. Langhton's and the friar's opinion, when her discourse was broke in upon by the return of the devotees.

At the usual hour, Malcolm retired to his apartment, and listened with infinite satisfaction to Donald's account of his jaunt,

giving him great credit for having so clearly pointed out to his brother, when and where he wished to meet him; repeating his cautions to avoid creating any suspicions, and desiring him to keep all his purchases under lock and key, till he meant to use them. The valet promised to be more upon his guard than ever; and his lord soon dismissed him, as he now, from being conscious that he had a plan in agitation, which it would be so much to the friar's interest to frustrate, was particularly fearful of even seeming to hold any consultations with his servant, since their only hopes of success rested on the monk's remaining in total ignorance of their intercourse with his captive.

The following morning, as the weather was still very pleasant for the season, our hero rode over to Highwood. Miss Albany still kept her room, which he now suspected she would not be permitted to leave, while Lord Dunluce remained there; nay, he had his doubts whether he should
be

be introduced to her in the country, as Lady Winifred might wish she should first appear at court: but the Earl assured him that it was in contemplation to take his heart by assault; therefore, this divinity was not to appear before him, till properly adorned for conquest, which he made no doubt of her being the next Monday.

“ Oh, she will look to wonderful advantage by the side of the fair Rosalie,” said Lord Dunluce, “ who would inevitably have robbed me of my heart, had she not been forbidden goods; but Aunt Win will never dispose of her *pargin* till Rosalie is married, as she means to bring them out together.”

“As you value my friendship, Dunluce, don’t drop a hint of the kind to Lady Winifred,” said our hero; “since, were such an idea to enter her head, she would certainly frame some excuse to leave Rosalie in the country.”

"If he were to be so indiscreet," re-
 joined

joined the Earl; "but, hush!—here comes her Ladyship."

Our hero having been received by his uncle and cousin, Lady Winifred and the Countess now joined them, and both bestowed the highest encomiums upon Rosalie and Lady William.

"Algernon is a true Langhton," observed her Ladyship, "for he does not bear the least resemblance to our family."

"Well, positively, I think him like Miss Albany, not his sister, *bien entendre*," said Lord Dunluce.

"I wonder you did not fancy him like Lady Zara Montrose, when you were exercising your fancy," said the Earl, anxious to soften down what even Lady Winifred could not think a flattering comparison.

"His Lordship merely wished to contradict me, nephew," rejoined the stately spinster; "but I repeat my assertion—Algernon Albany takes infinitely more after his grandfather's

grandfather's than his father's family. What, say you, Marquis?"

"I am intirely of your Ladyship's opinion," was the reply; and as he did not feel inclined to prolong his visit, he soon took his leave, politely hoping that he should have the advantage of seeing his fair cousin, when next he visited Highwood. This expressed wish to see her ward quite dispelled the old lady's anger, who assured him she looked forward with impatience to his becoming her inmate.

The Earl and Lord Dunluce accompanied him to the great-door, where his horses were in waiting, the latter whispering, as they approached it—"And I look forward with impatience to my departure from hence."

"Then, I suppose, you take my place at the Priory?" said the Marquis, in a gay tone.

"I think I will propose his becoming Mr. Langhton's guest, during the time his

grandchildren are to spend in town," rejoined the Earl; "since three months spent in seclusion, may render him less susceptible of *ennui*, when in comparative pleasant situations; since he only exists in a round of dissipation, as hurtful to his health as it is destructive to his morals."

Never had our hero heard the Earl so severe upon his cousin, though he felt that it must be very provoking, to hear him continually repining, because he led a rational, and what many people would have thought, a very pleasant life. Not chusing, however, to interfere between the father and son, he hastily mounted Glow-worm, and bowing to both, rode off.

When within sight of Chedworth, a boy, about four years old, who was standing at the door of a neat cottage by the roadside, crying very bitterly, caught his attention. Naturally fond of children, he had never been inattentive to the wants of those belonging to his soldiers; he therefore

fore checked his horse, inquiring, in a kind accent—"What is the matter, my little man?"

"Mammy and little brother are dead," he sobbed out, "and Johnny does not come with the Doctor."

Conceiving some accident must have happened, instantly alighting, he entered the cottage, and perceived, as the child had told him, a woman, to appearance lifeless, extended upon the mud floor, and an infant, in a wooden cradle by the side of her, which appeared to have just breathed its last. A few moments sufficed to convince him, that the wretched mother had only fallen in a fit, probably in consequence of the shock her feelings had undergone; therefore, calling to his groom, he desired him to hang the horses to the railing in front, and to come and assist him in raising the fainting sufferer, which they did between them, and having placed her upon a bed in the adjoining room, the Marquis endeavoured to recall her to her

senses. The child, who was an attentive, though weeping spectator, hearing his Lordship inquire for water, led the groom to a neighbouring pool, where he filled a pitcher with this salutary element, by the assistance of which, and some aromatic vinegar the Marquis had about him, they succeeded in restoring her to life. The first words she uttered, unconscious of who was thus humanely busied in recovering her, were—" 'Tis too late, Doctor—the poor dear lamb is gone!"

" I grieve for your loss. my good woman," said our hero, in the gentlest accent, " and I can conceive what your feelings must be. You are not, however, left childless; and the affection of that fine little fellow, who told me of your distress, must help to console you for your recent loss."

" Lord bless me, Sir!" cried the astonished cottager, in an audible whisper, gazing in amaze upon the person, who was still holding a smelling-bottle to her nose,

nose, “why, if I a’nt mistaken, you be the stranger lord I seed at church, last Sunday! Only to think of your goodness, in coming to my assistance!”

Tears, at last, seemed to relieve her oppressed heart, and she was endeavouring to express her heartfelt gratitude, when a boy, about nine years old, ran in, crying —“Here comes the Doctor, mammy! Shall I go for daddy now?”

The unexpected sight of a stranger supporting his mother, made him pause; and our hero, who expected to have seen the village apothecary following him, participated in his surprise, when Dr. Murray and his daughter entered the cottage, and found him administering to the wants and comforts of one of the poorest, but one of the most deserving inhabitants of the village; but he found the worthy Rector also acted in the capacity of physician, in which he was ably seconded by his excellent wife; and he had now obeyed the first summons of the poor cottager, who wished

him to have baptized and prescribed for the baby, at the same time.

Our hero never wished to blazon his charitable deeds, still he did not blush at being surprised, while merely, as he thought, following the golden rule, and readily accounted for his being there, adding—"I need not have had a greater proof of your unbounded charity, Doctor, than my having been, in the first moment of her recovery, addressed as you by this poor woman."

The Doctor returned the compliment with infinite politeness; and, as the invalid was now no longer in need of his services, took his leave of the worthy man, declaring his intention of calling at the Rectory, in the course of the week, and sending his compliments to Mrs. Murray and Miss Melbourne. He then departed, after slipping five guineas into the sick woman's hand, and pursued his ride home; and before evening, his condescension, benevolence, and charity, were the theme
of

of the whole village—so cheaply may the great render themselves beloved and respected !

But his groom, who, as well as Donald, had been with him abroad, related twenty similar stories to the one now in circulation at Chedworth—" His lord, God bless him ! had never been above speaking to the soldier's wives, and his kind words had done them as much good as his charitable gifts. Aye ! many's the poor baby he has seen christened—and they will all have reason to pray for their godfather, as long as they live."

The other servants were equally eloquent in his praise—there was not a distressed cottager within twenty miles of Montrose Castle ; every one that would work was sure to be amply provided for, while in health, and carefully attended, if they were ill. The present trod in the exact steps of the late Marquis of Endermay, who was the most charitable of men ; but, from a child, their lord had evinced
the

the greatest compassion for the poorer classes.

His health was, therefore, drank by unanimous consent, in the tap-room at the Nag's-head, with three times three cheers; as, next to their rector, the inhabitants of Chedworth were now inclined to rank the young soldier, who, of course, did not mention his morning's adventure to the family; but Donald, who learnt it in the afternoon, when he, as usual, went into the village, was not so discreet; and thus it reached the ears of Lady William and her daughter, who could appreciate the character of their young relative. Mr. Langhton and the friar did not hear of it; as Ashton said, when a little mellow—"It would be too mortifying to them, to learn that a heretic was a better Christian than such devout Catholics. But there are godly, and there are good men—my master ranks among the first, Mr. Donald, and your lord among the last."

Little of moment, however, occurred
between

between this and Thursday, if we except that daily letters passed between the captive and our hero, since no time could be absolutely fixed for his making his escape, till the arrival of Donald's brother; though the Marquis was resolved not to leave the Priory till he was safe off, as he grew more and more interested in his behalf, every letter he received from him, as he always returned every letter he wrote him by Donald, with his answers to them, that he might not leave any thing behind him, which might lead his goalers to suspect that he had ever corresponded with any one; and he had promised to return all his writing materials, whenever they were required, which, he ventured to hope, they would not be, till he was upon the eve of his departure, as he never wrote, but when sure of being uninterrupted for some hours, and had never as yet spilled a drop of ink, or left any mark upon his fingers likely to excite any suspicions in Francisco, who alone visited him when he returned

turned from mass in the morning, with his breakfast, and about two o'clock with his dinner, as he never had any supper, nor never saw him again, till he, at the usual time, brought him his breakfast in the morning:

This was very pleasing intelligence to both master and man, since, at this rate, more than twelve hours would probably elapse before his escape would be discovered; when it occurred to the Marquis, that as so few people knew there was a prisoner in this said turret, the Father might deem it expedient to conceal his having left the house, even from Mr. Langhton. He therefore thought that some traces of a person having done so, ought to be suffered to be discovered, just to hear what sort of a story the Father would tell, and how far it might coincide with the poor prisoner's; this he hinted to Donald; on the Wednesday morning; who thought it was an excellent notion, since he believed the old monk was capable of

5 deceiving

deceiving Old Nick himself, upon a pinch; therefore, it was not impossible that Mr. Langhton was not aware why the poor young fellow was so cooped up.

“That is very probable,” rejoined the Marquis, who conceived that he might be doing his brother and sister an essential service, were he to unmask this old hypocrite, compared with whom, he thought even Belthorpe a good character; and some story must be told, to account for any one’s being thus strangely confined: yet he did not wish to have it suspected which way the fugitive went, much less that he or Donald had been assisting in his escape.

The rope-ladder was nearly completed, and Donald had planned how to render it very secure. It had also been settled, that the captive should dress in a complete suit of the Marquis’s clothes, previous to his making his escape; and that his own, and the rope-ladder, should be let down after him, and conveyed away by his companion,

nion, whom Donald meant to desire to sink them in the first pond they came to: as for his clothes hanging loosely about him, that might easily be accounted for, as he looked extremely pale; therefore, he might be said to be in a decline, admitting any questions were asked; and his not speaking English might easily be concealed, since Macrue, Donald's brother, might say he was deaf and dumb, which would perfectly account for their conversing by signs.

These were matters the Marquis and Donald had more than once canvassed over; but they could not decide how to make his having obtained his liberty generally known to the household, till his Lordship, after mature reflection, observed, that as he had both sheets and blankets to his bed, he might, during the afternoon of Friday, tear them all into stripes, and then tie them all together by smaller slips of the sheets; this done, he (Donald) might fasten this strange kind of rope, (which would,
of

of course, appear to be of his own contriving), to the iron *chevaux de frize*, and then throw the end over into the garden, as it would probably reach nearly to the ground; and his mattrass might be thrown over the spikes, to account for his having cleared them unhurt.

“ Oh, I can manage every thing, my Lord: only do you write your directions to the prisoner, and explain why you wish to have it known that he has outwitted his treacherous goaler, and then leave every thing to me. He will not have half the difficulty in making his rope, I have had in making the ladder—and if Alick were but come, I think we shall prove a dead match for the friar; however, I make no doubt I shall either see or hear from my brother on Friday—and then, woe be to Father Benedetto !”

It will be sufficient to say, that the Marquis wrote a very long letter, containing his final and general instructions to the poor captive, which Donald delivered to
him

him on the Wednesday evening; and he was soon convinced, that the poor youth would strictly conform to every direction the Marquis had written him. The valet merely stopped to pour some more aquafortis upon the frame, which had, he found already, had the desired effect, and then departed, with his usual precaution, after desiring the prisoner, by signs, not to expect to see him till Friday, when he hoped every thing would be prepared for his escape; and he told his lord, when assisting him to undress, the time would seem nearly as long to him, till his brother arrived, as it doubtless would do to the poor captive.

“ We must only hope Alexander Macrue will not be prevented from obeying your summons, since I am, to the full, as anxious to have the poor fellow safely housed in London, as you can be; though, doubtless, my anxiety is trifling, when compared to his. However, rather than disappoint him, should Alick disappoint
our

our expectations, I will let James (one of his footmen) into our secret, and send him off with him."

Donald could only hope that his brother's arrival would render this unnecessary; as, like his lord, he saw many objections to any of the servants being absent at such a juncture.

CHAP. X.

ON the following day, which was Thursday, our hero, out of compliment to the party he was going to visit, adorned in a new suit of regimentals; and as the costume of the Highland regiments is particularly becoming to fair men, he certainly
looked

looked even better than when he had landed at Plymouth, having upon this occasion devoted rather more time to his toilette: his tartan cap was also extremely well adapted to the expression of his countenance; and even Mr. Langhton, when he joined the party in the great parlour, paid him some very flattering compliments upon his personal appearance; declaring that he thought, in that dress, the family likeness between him and Rosalie (who was, of course, present), was even striking.

“ You wish to render me very vain, Mr. Langhton,” was the reply, “ since my sister may be deemed a first-rate belle.”

“ Thank you for so fine a compliment, my dear brother,” said the amiable, and, when in spirits, droll girl, “ which, after what my grandfather has said, I must suppose is founded in truth; since, if I resemble you, I am much handsomer than I ever supposed.”

At this moment the Father entered, followed by Algernon and Belthorpe; the first

gave

gave a sort of involuntary start, when he caught sight of the Marquis, which he accounted for, in a way that would have been very flattering to a vain man; but the young soldier had too much understanding to set any value upon his personal attractions. Not so Algernon Albany, who vainly fancied that he only required the Highland costume, to be as much admired as his brother evidently was, by every one present; a foolish remark he made to that effect, induced our hero to examine his dress more minutely than he would probably otherwise have done, though he certainly wished him to make a favourable impression upon the party at Preston; but, to his great mortification, he thought he had never seen him look worse; his clothes were very ill-made, and his blue frock was at least three shades too light to be fashionable, which was not very surprising, since he had left the choice of the colour to Mr. Carpenter, who happened to have
the

the remains of a piece by him, which he had purchased for some farmer's sons, who chose to wear *true blue*; wishing, however, to make some difference between them and the young lord of the manor, he added a black velvet cape to his frock, with which Algernon had been extremely pleased: not so Mr. Langhton, who, as well as Lady William, had perceived our hero's disapprobation of his appearance; and the old gentleman was not sparing of his censures. Lady William merely wished he had, upon such an occasion, employed a Manchester taylor, and consulted his brother, who would have prevented him from falling into any of the absurd extremes fashion authorizes.

"Why, I did consult my brother," rejoined the provoked youth, "and he merely told me to dress as I always did. I am sure I would have gone in my everyday suit, if I had thought there would have been such a fuss, because Carpenter wished to make me look like other folks."

The

The friar, to Malcolm's great surprise, observed—"That Mr. Albany's intentions were very good; he was fearful of disgracing his brother; this had led him perhaps into an error, but which would certainly find favour in the Marquis of Endermay's eyes, and who would probably be kind enough to prevent his sinning against the rules of fashion in future."

"Oh, believe me, Father, I am neither a slave, nor a strict adherent to the reigning fashions," replied our hero; "I merely endeavour to avoid singularity;" and to his great relief, as he perceived Mr. Langhton was inclined to prolong the debate, he heard the Earl of Algernon's carriage drive into the court, who had promised to call for him and his brother, though Chedworth was not in the direct road to Preston; and, in a few moments, his Lordship, and his certainly very fashionable son, were shewn in. The latter, having taken a hasty glance at his cousin Algernon, with difficulty preserved his gravity, while pay-
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ing his respects to Mr. Langhton and Lady William; to Rosalie he was extremely polite; and by way of flattering the old gentleman, he bestowed some very pompous eulogiums upon his Gothic mansion, and led him on to relate the history of some of the reverend gentlemen, whose portraits adorned the saloon, till the Earl was obliged to break in upon his legends, as it grew late, and they were to dine at four; therefore, after reminding Lady William of her Monday's engagement, and promising Mr. Langhton to bring the young men home, as soon as they could with politeness leave their party, they departed, leaving Mr. Langhton half repenting of having suffered his grandson to accompany them to this, he feared, jovial dinner.

"I hope Algernon will not be led into any excess," he said, when he returned into the saloon.

Father Benedetto had infinitely too high an opinion of his principles, to entertain any such fears, he replied, which rather raised

raised the old gentleman's spirits; and Lady William was convinced, that both the Marquis and Earl would rather check than encourage her son in any errors: still the old gentleman was afraid Algernon would be thrown off his guard, and that he might disclose more respecting his *prison-house*, than he wished to have known. This he did not chuse, however, to alledge as one of his reasons for regretting that he had suffered him to leave home, unaccompanied by Belthorpe; but a Catholic priest would have been so much out of his place at such a dinner, that he could not have proposed his accompanying the young men; it might, besides, have been deemed an affront to the Earl and the Marquis.

- Father Benedetto did not participate in his uneasiness, having, as he thought, guarded against every thing, as he had had a private conference with the young man, during which, he had duly impressed upon his mind various cautions; assuring him,

that were he to give into any excess, or to disclose any particular which it might be improper that Protestants should know, a very heavy judgment would fall upon him; and his errors would be indubitably revealed to him and Mr. Langhton, who would certainly never again suffer him to leave the Priory; thus taking advantage of his known superstition, rather than appealing to his principles: but the friar had always been accustomed to govern his pupils and penitents, by holding out punishments *in terrorem*, depending more upon their fear, than their innate love of virtue, to render them subservient to his will.

Belthorpe had always pursued the same method with Algernon; but being infinitely more acquainted with the world than the more wily friar was, he had his fears, that the Marquis and Earl might be able to laugh their relation out of many of his silly scruples; and should he, when a
little

little elevated, drop a hint of the suspicions they both entertained respecting the turret-room, it might prove the forerunner of his (Belthorpe's) disgrace; since he knew the friar would lay all the blame to him; and he had many reasons for wishing to continue where he was, as the hopes he entertained of future advantages made him patiently endure his present privations; the monk was not immortal, and he had a plan in embryo, that might enable him, not only to succeed him as *director-general*, but even to establish his authority upon a still firmer basis than the Father had ever done; and it would be very conducive to his interest, he conceived, were Mr. Langhton to survive his spiritual consoler. This, however, was a matter of doubt; he was, therefore, obliged to play his part very skilfully, to conciliate both his patrons, to keep upon good terms with Lady William and her daughter, and to retain the confidence of his weak and un-

suspecting pupil. But Belthorpe could be all in all to all men; and he thought that he was too deeply versed in some of the Padre's secrets, to have much to fear from him; still, at times, he had his doubts whether that very circumstance might not have rendered him an object of dislike to the old man; and he could not unmask him to Mr. Langhton, without declaring his having long been privy to some rather iniquitous transactions; and if he could but fathom the mystery attached to the turret, he might be able, at least to alarm Mr. Langhton; but even that would be a hazardous attempt.

While, however, he was thus revolving how to undermine the Padre's interest, his pupil was proceeding to Preston, and plainly evinced to his companions, that he thought himself free from all controul, the moment he turned his back upon his prison, as he always styled the Priory, when out of his grandfather's hearing. Lord
Dunluce

Dunluce was also in very high spirits, and rattled away nearly as fast as his less informed cousin, whom he would have quizzed most unmercifully, had he not been restrained by the presence of the Marquis and his father; as it was, he succeeded in drawing him on, till the Earl was shocked to find that he held both his grandfather and the Padre in the highest contempt, cared very little for his mother, and still less for his sister, Belthorpe appearing to be his sole friend and confidant; yet, to his infinite astonishment, he found he was superstitiously attached to the forms and ceremonies of the religion he professed, and that he firmly believed all heretics would go to the d-v-l.

The Marquis suffered him to run on without interruption, as he feared the errors of his creed and education had taken too deep root, to be ever totally eradicated; and it would be a futile attempt to hope to work a reformation in his way of thinking, while he remained under the

controul of people he avowedly despised, but still feared; indeed, he seemed to think the Father could divine the past, and, if required, foretell the future.

“Then I am astonished,” said the Marquis, “he never divined that you sometimes peep into his *sanctum sanctorum*.”

“Oh, that is no sin, you know, brother; besides, Belthorpe is privy to that, and we merely wish to see the old fellow counting his hoards;” detailing to the Earl and Lord Dunluce to what the Marquis alluded.

Lord Dunluce gave him infinite credit for his ingenuity; Lord Algernon made no remarks; and soon after, they reached Preston, and drove to the principal inn, where they found all the officers assembled, waiting their arrival, who, it may be supposed, greeted the two peers with every mark of respect and politeness. Lord Dunluce seemed a no less welcome guest; and the young Catholic, having been introduced to every one present, soon found himself

himself quite at his ease, though among total strangers; and during dinner, he convinced them that he was a true *bon vivant*; nor was he at all backward when the bottles began to circulate, as he never refused to join in the bumper toasts, which he tossed off with true conviviality. The Earl was astonished, as he seemed to carry off his repeated libations to the shrine of Bacchus, far better than he could have done; since he, as well as the Marquis, after doing honour to the most popular toasts, frequently passed the decanters; our hero endeavouring to make amends for the weakness of his head, which he always alleged as an excuse for not drinking to any excess, by relating several droll anecdotes, which had occurred during his residence at Malta, and which had the desired effect of keeping the party in a roar of mirth.

Some of the officers then sung various popular ballads, in honour of the heroes of Egypt. Lord Dunluce followed their

example, treating the company with a very burlesque song of Dibdin's, which was very much applauded. Mr. Albany was next called upon; he professed his inability to treat them with any song in vogue, as his sister had none of Dibdin's, and he could not relish Handel's; but if they chose to hear a French drinking-song, which his tutor had taught him, he would very readily oblige them.

“By all means—By all means,” was echoed by the whole party, the Marquis and Earl excepted, who feared he would only expose himself; but Lord Dunluce was delighted with the idea: and Algernon, who had drank enough to be quite in his element, after putting his pocket handkerchief over his head, and tying the ends under his chin, in imitation of a beard, mumbled out a most ridiculous monkish song, encouraging the fraternity to drink, as a preliminary step to their salvation, and reprobating sobriety in a friar, as one of the deadly sins; and as his gestures were
extremely

extremely appropriate, and he had not a bad voice, he fully succeeded in amusing the company.

Between nine and ten, they took their leave of the party, who received very pressing invitations from both the Marquis and Earl, to visit them either in town or country. Algernon Albany, wishing to be equally polite, said—"I am sorry, gentlemen, I cannot, as yet, give you a similar invitation to Langhton Priory; but when, as I mean it shall, it becomes Albany House, then I shall rejoice to see you there—as I promise you, the cellars shall be plentifully stocked, and I will keep an excellent cook." Thus he ran on, being more than three parts tipsey, while shaking hands with all those present, who readily promised to visit him at the appointed time, having been extremely diverted by many of his queer remarks.

The night was cloudy, and there was no moon; but as the postillions knew the

road, and the carriage lamps were lit, the Earl did not conceive they ran any risk of their necks; though, as a further precaution, he desired one of the out-riders to precede the carriage, as he suspected the postillions had been making even more free than himself, but did not mention the circumstance to his companions. They proceeded, however, without accident, for more than six miles, when they came to a part of the road which was mending, which they had remarked in the morning, and as the stones were very little broken, they had then driven on one side; and the postillions resolved to do the same now, the slope not appearing sufficiently steep to induce them to suppose there would be any danger; the strong beer they had been drinking had, besides, rendered them infinitely more daring than they were in general; they, therefore, thought it needless to slacken their pace, till the Earl, seriously alarmed by their rashness, hastily

let down the glass on his side, calling—
“Mind what you are about. Do not drive so fast.”

“No danger, my Lord,” cried the lad who drove the wheel horses, though, in obedience to his orders, they were slackening their pace, when the hind wheel catching upon a loose stone, sent them over, fortunately very gently, owing to their having nearly pulled up, at the moment the accident happened. Our hero and his uncle were sitting forwards, Lord Dunluce opposite his father; the Marquis and his brother were therefore undermost, as they fell; and probably, if the former, with infinite presence of mind, had not let the glass down on their side, when he found they were going, they might have been severely cut: as it was, no one was hurt, though Algernon called out most lustily, when aware of his danger, and began to recite paters and aves, as fast as he could utter them, which struck the Marquis as so ridiculous, he with difficulty forbore laughing
ing

ing at this sudden fit of devotion; while the Earl, who was seriously alarmed, feared the poor young fellow was very much hurt, endeavouring to avoid pressing upon our hero, who requested he would lie quiet, as he was not conscious of having received any injury.

Lord Dunluce, ever upon the alert, and being the lightest of the party, soon scrambled out of the window, regardless of his terrified neighbour, whom he had certainly prevented from moving, by his exertions to extricate himself, which having done, with the assistance of the servants, the door was soon opened, and the other three gentlemen followed his example, no one having received more than a few slight bruises; though Algernon was obliged to be assisted out of the carriage, and the moment he found himself what he deemed in safety, he repeatedly crossed himself, again running on with paternosters and ave marias, without attending to his brother's and uncle's inquiries of whether he was
hurt;

hurt ; and before he chose to resolve their questions, a sudden qualm, either the consequence of his having made so free with the bottle, or of his recent alarm, obliged him to discharge the liberal potations he had been taking, in the road. Fearful, however, that he had received some inward bruise, they renewed their inquiries with increased anxiety, till he acknowledged that he believed he had drank rather too much ; and he feared that their late accident had been a judgment upon him, for having broken his word with the Padre, and for having sung that wicked song.

“ Then we all participated in this said judgment,” resumed the Marquis, who had never before presumed he was so deplorably weak, “ probably because we are heretics ; however, cheer up, and let us know whether you feel any strains or bruises, since we have fortunately escaped unhurt ?”

“ I can’t

“ I can’t say I feel as if I was much hurt—my head aches, else—”

“ Oh, if that is all, I fancy we need not place that complaint to the overturn,” interrupted the Marquis.

“ Why, I can hardly tell, I am so bewildered; but I would not have grandfather, nor the friar, know what has befallen me, for as much as I shall ever be worth; they would confine me for life, and vow—aye, you may laugh—but they would vow it was a judgment upon me.”

“ Then we will not mention the circumstance to them,” cried Lord Dunluce, who had been laughing at the discomfited glutton, till he vowed his sides ached.

“ No, no! we will keep your secret,” said the Marquis; “ so, come and assist in raising the carriage; it may help to dissipate the vapours that annoy your brain—and I am fearful that your head-ache would meet with very little pity at the Priory.”

Algernon was well aware of this, therefore

fore readily lent his assistance in righting the carriage, though he continued, every now and then, to mutter a pater to himself, and to recommend himself very fervently to Saint Benedict, his patron; which did not escape Lord Dunluce's notice, whose mirth had never been more completely excited; while the Marquis and Earl pitied his superstitious weakness, which led him to hope, that gabbling over a few prayers would atone for any errors.

The carriage being, however, raised, and placed in the middle of the road, which the Earl desired the postillions to keep, in defiance of stones, they again took their seats in it; Algernon feeling rather ashamed at having rendered himself such an object of mirth to his cousin, who tormented him most unmercifully, though with infinite drollery, till they reached the gates of the Priory, which they did not do, owing to their delay, till past eleven.

Not to disturb the family, they alighted at the portal, and found Belthorpe only sitting

sitting up for them; and as the Marquis declined taking any refreshment, they immediately adjourned to their respective apartments, where Algernon acknowledged, under the seal of secrecy, to his dear tutor, what had befallen them; but omitted having been previously tipsey; nor did he chuse to mention how well he had entertained the company: still the tutor feared he had been very imprudent, and highly blamed him for his ill-timed fit of devotion; as Belthorpe did not, like his more weak-minded pupil, fancy that either paters or aves, or even calling upon all the saints in the calendar, was very efficacious in time of danger. But while he was endeavouring to eradicate some of Algernon's superstitious notions, Donald was anticipating, while undressing his lord, the satisfaction both he and the poor captive would feel, if he was, as he fully hoped and expected, safe without the walls of the Priory, by that time the following evening.

“ If your brother does but answer your
letter

letter in person, I think it very probable he may be at Manchester by this hour," resumed the Marquis. "Would to God he were once safe out of the house! I would have you set off before dinner; say you are going to Preston, to fetch a pair of boots, that I purposely bespoke there to-day; instead of which, do you make the best of your way to Manchester—the boots were not ready will be a sufficient excuse for your returning empty-handed, and George can fetch them on Saturday. Should your brother merely have written, we must, perforce, put some one else in the secret, as I dare not delay the escape of the prisoner, for fear any unforeseen event should frustrate our plans."

Donald hoped for the best, he said, soon retiring, though, like his master, he did not devote many hours to sleep.

Algernon, who was extremely anxious to keep the overturn a secret, came into his brother's room, the moment he returned

turned from mass, to enforce the cautions he had given him the overnight. The Marquis gaily assured him he might depend upon his discretion; and when they joined the family, he merely said, in answer to Mr. Langhton's questions, that they had spent a very pleasant day; not giving even Rosalie to understand that their brother had certainly made too free with the juice of the grape. Not chusing to ride out, he thought he would pay his promised visit to the Rectory; this he alledged as an excuse for not accompanying his brother on horseback, who gave him a hint that he was going, as was his general custom on Fridays, to lunch at Hilton: this would alone have prevented the Marquis from bending his steps the same way, had he had no other engagement, as he was by no means desirous of increasing his intimacy with the French ladies.

CHAP. XI.

THE Doctor was at home, and seemed extremely flattered by our hero's visit, who, after politely inquiring for the ladies, took a seat in the worthy rector's study, who assured him, that the poor creature he had so kindly assisted, and so generously relieved, was truly deserving of his charity, since the husband, though very industrious, found it difficult to maintain her and the children; the poor woman having had very bad health ever since the birth of the child she had so lately lost, which had prevented her from plying her spinning-wheel with her usual industry. The Marquis instantly

stantly presented the rector with a ten-pound note, for the use of this indigent family, requesting he would bestow it upon them in what proportions he pleased, or make any necessary purchases for them, since industry ought always to be rewarded.

This subject having, however, been fully discussed, the Doctor very politely inquired after Dr. Campbell, adding—"I know he is still a resident at Montrose Castle, and, with infinite justice, extremely proud of the continued friendship of his late pupil."

"Good Heavens! my dear Sir," exclaimed the astonished Malcolm, "are you the Dr. Murray whom I have so frequently heard him mention as one of his earliest friends? since it never occurred to me, nor do I think it did to him, that you resided in this vicinity, else he would certainly have favoured me with a letter of introduction to you; as he always mentions you in the most flattering terms, and
has

has often told me that you were students in the same college."

"We certainly were, my Lord," replied the Doctor; "and for some years after our separation, we constantly corresponded; but, after a time, we ceased to write, as we moved in very different circles, and were placed at a very great distance from each other. I came to England, where I did mean to study for the bar; but my family having different views for me, I finally took orders, and am now, as your Lordship perceives, quite the country parson; and if I could but hope I bore any resemblance to Goldsmith's Vicar of Auburn, I should feel completely happy; though, I fear, I require more than forty pounds a-year, to render me, like him, 'passing rich.'"

"That I can suppose; though, as from him," rejoined the Marquis,

" ' Truth from your lips prevails with double sway,

And fools who come to scoff remain to pray.' "

The

The entrance of the ladies, who preceded a servant bearing various refreshments, gave a turn to the discourse; and, after a little general chit-chat, Charlotte Melbourne asked their guest, whether the Priory was really worth seeing? He spoke highly in praise of the building, descanting very judiciously upon the various beauties it displayed; but agreed that many more modern houses were infinitely more comfortable, Highwood and the Rectory, for example.

“ Oh, mercy, my Lord! Why, I have been assured that this diminutive mansion would stand in the great hall at the Priory.”

“ This room is certainly small, when compared to those I have of late occupied, but is certainly more adapted to an Englishman’s ideas of comfort,” replied the Marquis.

The Doctor agreed to the justice of the remark, adding—“ I have been assured
that

that Montrose Castle unites comfort to magnificence, not often the case."

"Come and judge for yourself, Doctor, and bring these ladies with you; our Highland scenery is deserving notice, and I do not mean to stir from home next summer."

"Your Lordship does us infinite honour; therefore do not be very much surprised, if we should take advantage of your politeness—that is, Mrs. Murray and myself; as my niece is merely a bird of passage here, and my daughter is engaged to spend some months with her, when she returns home."

"Very true, uncle; still I should enjoy visiting Scotland, since Buonaparte certainly confines us within the limits of our little isle; but I am even more anxious to explore the inside of the Priory—what little I can see of it seems so delightfully gloomy. Possibly your Lordship is not afraid of ghosts; else I can assure you, there are many old women in the village, who maintain the stately fabric is haunted, particularly

particularly a certain room with a large Gothic bow window, or, in the appropriate term, an oriel."

"Did you ever hear of an old manor-house, or baronial residence, that had not some such absurd legend attached to it?" interrupted the Doctor, whose looks had more than once conveyed an indirect reproach to the gay thoughtless Charlotte; "and as the Priory is inaccessible to the inhabitants of Chedworth, they must be deeply versed in its private history! The fact is, my Lord, Mr. Langhton is not so popular as I could wish, in the village—a Catholic and a Jesuit are names the lower classes grossly misinterpret; and Father Benedetto's being an Italian is all against him. Lady William Albany is a most excellent woman, and an example to every daughter—her's, I make no doubt, will be no less deserving: of her son I know very little, as I dare not address him, for fear of alarming the susceptible mind of Mr. Langhton; and as he does not believe
that

that any one can be saved who are not zealous Catholics, he acts up to his principles, in secluding his grandchildren from the world."

"Your arguments are very conclusive, Doctor," resumed the Marquis: "I can only regret Mr. Langhton is not more liberal in his opinions; since I am convinced my sister is a great loser, in being debarred from associating with the ladies present; but I do hope, as she is to accompany our aunt, Lady Winifred Albany, to town next spring, that she will be less strictly confined when she returns to the Priory."

Mrs. and Miss Murray made a very polite reply; but Charlotte Melbourne declared Mr. Langhton would not find it so easy a matter to keep her within bounds, since she should long since have emerged from his Gothic habitation, haunted or not, even at the hazard of excommunication. The Doctor endeavoured to soften down her speech; and our hero gaily observed,

that a ghost, where no company was admitted, might vary the scene. Mrs. Murray endeavoured to give a turn to the conversation; and after spending a couple of hours at the Rectory, the Marquis took his leave, infinitely more prepossessed in favour of Miss Murray than of her gay volatile cousin, who would, he made no doubt, as she boasted, have soon set Mr. Langhton and his anathemas at defiance.

The anxiety he felt for the poor captive, however, soon banished the Murray family from his mind: admitting, as he hoped, he got safe off, what story would the monk tell, to account, in any plausible way, for his having been so long confined, since he must have had some very cogent reasons for having kept him thus secreted? and he could not help flattering himself, that, under Providence, he seemed to be marked as the agent to redress the poor young fellow's wrongs, to whom he had already written a very long letter, desiring him to confide implicitly in the person under
whose

whose care he meant to send him to London, explaining who he was, and every *et cetera*; and to this he added a pocket-book, in which he inclosed fifty pounds in notes, upon the blank leaves of which, he had written him a sort of vocabulary, in English and Italian, just to enable him to make his wants known to his companion. These he gave to Donald, when he dressed for dinner, desiring him to hasten to Manchester, where he hoped he would find his brother, for whom he gave him a short letter, containing his general orders, and desiring he would write to Donald the moment he arrived in town. Should Alick disappoint them, it was settled that the valet should let his master know when he returned; but if he gave him the meeting, our hero was to content himself with keeping Lady William in chat, while Donald liberated the prisoner, and took every precaution to prevent its being discovered what road he had taken.

Having thus, as he conceived, guarded

against every thing, the Marquis went down to dinner, mentally praying for the success of his plans; while the still more anxious valet hastened to the Nag's-head, having told Ashton he was going to Preston, and mounting Glow-worm, set off for Manchester, and had scarcely reached the inn, before the coach he had desired his brother would come down by, rattled into the yard: he flew out, and to his infinite joy, the first person who alighted was the man he was so anxiously expecting. Having shaken hands very cordially, they returned into the room Donald had quitted, where Alick was briefly informed why he had been so hastily summoned. The Marquis's letter and liberal promises, would alone have sufficed, independent of his regard for his brother, to have rendered him their staunch auxiliary.

If they could but get the poor young fellow safe without the walls of that c--s--d Priory, he would be answerable for their not being traced. He should travel as his
nephew,

nephew, and be deaf and dumb, which would answer many good purposes. Once in London, he could accommodate him in his own house; and he would watch over him with the utmost care, till the Marquis came to town, who might depend upon his and his wife's secrecy; and upon their conforming in every respect to his wishes.

Donald did not think the old monk would dare to make any great bustle; and if he did, it might be so much the better for the young man, who might thus discover who he was, and to answer what purpose he had been thus strictly confined: at all events, he (Alick) could have nothing to fear, while acting under the orders of his lord, who would certainly protect him, let what would occur. Of this, Alick was too well aware, to entertain any fears for his safety.

The next thing, therefore, that was to be considered, was how to get Juliano to Manchester. Admitting (which Donald

would not allow himself to doubt) they got him without the walls, would he be able to walk ten miles, after having been so long confined? With such a prospect before him, Alick thought he might; they could take their time; and as Donald conceived that his spirits would be unusually buoyant, he thought they might at all events make the attempt, since any conveyance that they might procure, might ultimately lead to a discovery of the road they had taken. However, if the poor youth could not reach Manchester, Alick resolved to leave him in some secure corner, while he procured a post-chaise; and the farther they were from the Priory, in case he did knock up, the better.

Having thus settled their plans, they left Manchester together, taking it in turns to ride Glow-worm, and soon after six o'clock they reached Chedworth. Leaving his brother at the entrance of the village, Donald took the horse to the Nag's-head, merely telling the groom that he had had his ride
for

for his pains, as the boots were not ready; he then hastened back to his brother, whom he led across some fields, to the lane which ran by the side of the chapel and turret, and having placed him under the high hedge opposite, he explained to him where he proposed letting down his rope-ladder, bidding him be careful to gather up that and the bundle he should fling over, as soon as Juliano was safe landed, which he hoped he would be, before eight o'clock; if, however, any thing occurred to prevent his leaving his attic that evening, he (Alick) must endeavour to procure a bed at Highwood, as he should not wish him to be seen at Chedworth, since he was known to some of the servants. Upon second thoughts, however, Donald promised to join him himself, should any thing induce him to delay liberating the captive; and thus they separated, Alick promising not to move three yards from the spot, till after the Priory clock had struck eight, having been

amply supplied with money by his brother, and with proper instructions how to act, upon any and every emergency they could foresee.

While the active Donald walked round to the portal, to his great joy, the bell tolled for vespers as he was crossing the hall; he therefore merely exchanged a few words with Ashton, relative to where he had been; and then having seen the old man proceed to chapel, he hastened up into his own room, where every thing was prepared for Juliano's flight; in ten minutes more, therefore, he softly stole towards the lumber-room, with his bundle of clothes for the prisoner, his ladder, lantern, and various tools which he thought he might want in his pockets. No difficulty having impeded his progress, he soon reached the dome, where Juliano was already stationed, ready to afford him every assistance in his power. In a few minutes, he was able to get out four panes of glass, in consequence of the frame-work being
very

very much corroded, the prisoner holding his pillow to catch them as they fell; when Donald made him a sign to break them very gently, and strew them about the room, he instantly obeyed him, ever evincing infinite promptitude at taking a hint; when the valet having made a sufficient opening, let down the bundle of clothes, Juliano instantly stripped, and was soon adorned in clean linen, riding pantaloons, boots, &c. &c., which made such an alteration in his appearance, that Donald would hardly have known him again; he had already packed up all his writing materials, which he put into the bundle he hastily made of his clothes, while the valet, with the aid of his tools, enlarged the opening sufficiently to let down his ladder, which he had already made fast; and in another minute, Juliano ascended, with his bundle in one hand, and his mattress, according to the Marquis's instructions, upon his back, which having thrown down, he flung his arms round the

scarcely-less gratified Donald, endeavouring by signs to express his gratitude; but, as even moments were precious, Juliano hastily untied his bundle, in which were two ropes, made in conformity to his deliverer's instructions, the shortest of which he instantly fastened to the bent iron frame, leaving the end hanging down into his apartment; the second, which was made out of both his blankets and sheets, Donald undertook to fasten to the *chevaux de frize*, mounting his wooden ladder for that purpose, and throwing the mattress across the precise spot, since it might easily be presumed that the captive had made shift to climb up the inner wall, or they might think he had first used his rope for that purpose—that was all left to conjecture. However, having arranged every thing to further the imposition they wished to practise upon the friar, and to oblige him to give some account of his late prisoner, Donald fastened his rope-ladder to the exact place he had pointed out to his brother,

brother, whom, upon looking down, he perceived anxiously waiting the event, he made no doubt; he therefore hastened down again, and making Juliano precede him up the wooden ladder, having previously given him the letter and pocket-book he had received from his lord, he assisted him to clear the *chevaux de frize*, and to obtain a firm footing upon the rope-ladder, when making him signs not to be too precipitate, he let go his hand, anxiously looking after him, as he descended rather faster than prudence warranted; but he knew he might depend upon his ladder, and he had taken care to fasten it very securely, and Alick was standing at the foot, to prevent it from swaying; nevertheless, his heart did not feel completely light, till he saw him jump upon the ground, and the next moment he threw down both ladder and bundle, and saw them, after picking them up, hasten over a stile leading into the fields, through which he had brought his brother, and

made no doubt of their soon being safe from all pursuit, admitting any was set on foot. He next hastened to secure his own retreat; but did not omit any necessary caution, to prevent even footsteps being traced upon the leads, in the direction the prisoner had made his escape, whose shoes, which he presumed, from their apparent age, as his toes were coming through them, had been made in Italy, he had secured, having an idea that they might corroborate the opinion of his having descended into the garden.

At last, however, he descended into the lumber-room, where he took care to leave every thing in the exact order as he had first found them, and then returned triumphant into his master's room, much more satisfied, and infinitely happier, than many conquerors have felt upon returning home victorious, as he had no drawbacks upon his felicity, and having, all things considered, been very expeditious, as it was not more than a quarter past eight.

eight. He went down into the garden, having previously pulled off his boots; and when without the house, he put on the Italian shoes, in which he made several steps, directly under the place where the sheets and blankets were suspended; and then darted at full speed to the opposite corner, where he wished it to be supposed the fugitive had contrived to scramble over the wall.

He then returned into the house, resumed his boots, locked up the slippers, and returned a mental thanksgiving for having been permitted to succeed so well in so daring an attempt, wishing he could let his lord know how he had managed matters; still he dare not frame any pretence to call him out; and was fearful that, should he venture into the parlour, Lady William might, if only from his countenance, suspect there was more than met the ear, in whatever he might say.

At last, however, he was *tête-à-tête* with the Marquis, to whom the evening had seemed

seemed unusually long, though he dared not propose retiring a moment sooner than common; and, as if on purpose to perplex him, Lady William had kept him in discourse after her father had retired, feeling assured that he must feel it very irksome to move, as he now did, by clock-work. With quite as much satisfaction as Donald related it, did he listen to how he had managed matters, telling the gratified valet that he seemed to have thought of but every thing; gaily observing, that he had displayed as much prudence and forethought as an experienced general could have done, when retreating from a superior army; promising to reward both him and his brother, for having so ably seconded his charitable intentions.

Donald declared he was more than rewarded in having so fully succeeded; hoping the young man would be able to reach Manchester, and wondering whether the Father would make any discoveries that night. The Marquis hoped not, as it might
enable

enable him to conceal Juliano's flight, though he might not see the second rope; but as Francisco never visited him of an evening, probably his evasion would remain a secret till the breakfast-hour, or till the gardeners discovered the rope hanging from the turret.

Donald agreed this was very probable; and having assured his lord, that his brother and him had guarded against every probable or possible obstruction to their plans, he retired to sleep, in the pleasing hope of having rescued a fellow-creature from a state of bondage, if not from destruction.

CHAP. XII.

NEVER had Father Benedetto slept more soundly, little suspecting that the prisoner he guarded as carefully as he would have done the apple of his eye, was upon the road to London, before he went to mass in the morning. But no sooner were the household returned from chapel, than one of the gardeners, in going to his work, discovered the ingenious patch-work rope, which was strongly fastened to the cramp iron-work which surrounded what all the servants deemed the mysterious turret. Donald had managed to drop it exactly between the Padre's windows, for fear he should

should catch sight of it when he rose to mass, though it was hardly light enough at that hour to distinguish objects; still, had he put his head out to look at the weather, he did not wish he should knock his nose against this tissue of shreds.

The astonished gardener hastened back into the house, to communicate the wonderful discovery he had made to Mr. Ashton, who, having been to see what had so forcibly struck his fellow-servant, was dubious whether he ought to give Mr. Langhton, who was not yet returned from chapel, immediate notice of this strange occurrence, or whether he ought to call the Father, whom it most concerned; as he had long been convinced, as he had hinted to Donald, that there was a mystery belonging to that turret, with which no one but the Padre was really acquainted.

Before he had decided how to act, the Marquis, who had risen rather earlier than usual, (being, like his valet, extremely anxious to hear and see what was going forward),

forward), came down stairs. Donald was close behind him, and happened to meet Ashton, just as he was returning into the house, who told him what the gardener had discovered, and led him to the very spot, as a confirmation "strong as holy writ" of the truth of his recent surmises.

Donald played his part extremely well, agreed that this certainly appeared like proof positive, that there was some one confined in this observatory; and to judge from the size of the foot, he should suppose it was a man; besides, no female would have dared to have thus risked her neck.

"Then what the deuce could make that old Italian keep a man so close a prisoner? Had it been a woman, I should have been much less surprised. However, I must let my poor old fool of a master know that the friar's singing-bird is flown—I only wonder he has not already made the discovery. But you perceive, Mr. Donald, I was right in my conjectures—yes, yes, I

am

am not so easily duped as my master; I have long suspected there was more than telescopes secured by that *chevaux de frize*."

While Ashton was thus priding himself upon his wonderful sagacity, the Marquis was talking to Lady William and his sister, who were lamenting that his departure was drawing so near, when they were joined by Mr. Langhton and the friar, neither of whom, our hero was convinced, were as yet apprized of the departure of Juliano. But scarcely had they begun breakfast, when Francisco made his appearance, whose countenance clearly denoted that he was not the bearer of very agreeable intelligence, since he was as pale as death, and his hair seemed to stand almost erect, while he stammered out—"I want to speak with you, Sir," addressing his master.

The Padre caught the alarm, though he was as yet ignorant of what had terrified his confidant; but a guilty conscience generally outstrips even its accusers. He

was,

was, however, leaving the room, when Ashton entered, who anxious, we must suppose, to put an end to the monk's suspense, briefly related the discovery the gardener had made; entering into various details concerning the materials which composed the cord or rope that was suspended from the Father's observatory, not forgetting to mention the mattress, which was also visible from below, nor the print of a man's foot, whose toes, it should seem, to judge by the marks he had left in the mould, were coming through his shoes; and they had traced him from the border under the turret to the opposite corner, where they supposed he had made shift to scramble over the garden-walls, high as they were.

While Mr. Langhton was listening, with no very pleasant sensations, to Ashton's prolix detail, who seemed rejoiced at having such an opportunity to torment the friar, Francisco whispered in his ear a confirmation of all his worst fears.

“ Let

"Let us go and see what Ashton has been describing," cried the bewildered Mr. Langhton.

The Father, scarcely conscious of whether he was going, followed his lead, as did the Marquis, presuming he was included in the invitation; Belthorpe and Algernon did the same; and before they reached the spot, every servant belonging to the house was increasing the throng. The rope Ashton had very accurately described, they all agreed; and it certainly appeared, Belthorpe observed, that somebody had been rash enough to trust their neck to so frail a tenure.

"Poor fellow! he was not aware of the risk he ran," said the Father, giving Mr. Langhton a significant look, and returning into the house; the rest of the family by degrees followed his example, though most of the servants remained behind, to wonder and to reason respecting who this *poor fellow* was, who had thus risked his neck.

Mr.

Mr. Langhton was evidently both vexed and uneasy; Lady William seemed to participate in his feelings; and Rosalie wished (though she had solely been restrained from motives of delicacy) she had told her eldest brother, when he questioned her about the turret, that she had long suspected there was some one concealed in the Father's observatory. Her Ladyship, however, poured out the tea, and the party began breakfast; Algernon longing, yet not daring, to question his grandfather; Belthorpe, no less anxious to have this strange mystery elucidated; and our hero, fearing that he should at last, in consequence of being a heretic, be kept in the dark.

In about a quarter of an hour, the Father again joined them, though he had by no means recovered his wonted presence of mind, since, forgetful that there was a heretic, and a comparative stranger present, he exclaimed, looking at Mr. Langhton—"The unfortunate being has actually made

made his escape; and may, perhaps, ere this, have come to some untimely end."

"God forbid!" cried the person he addressed: "but it is necessary, as matters have turned out, Father, that the Marquis of Endermay, and my daughter and grandchildren, should know how this poor young fellow came to be an inmate of Langhton Priory, and what has induced him so rashly to endanger his neck in making his escape; since, in my opinion, he ought to be pursued without loss of time, and secured from running any more such risks."

"I have no longer any wish to keep his unfortunate malady a secret, my dear patron," resumed the disconcerted friar: "would to Heaven I had placed him at once in a receptacle for lunatics! but I could not divest myself of the idea, that maniacs are generally harshly treated, when from under the eye of their relations; and this poor youth being a foreigner, and unable to make himself understood in any language but Italian, I
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wished to keep him with me, and to administer, as far as laid in my power, to his comforts and caprices, since he is a nephew of mine—the son of my youngest sister, who is thirty years my junior. She was, like myself, devoted to the cloister by our parents; but a Tuscan nobleman having fallen in love with her, she became a wife, and the mother of the hapless boy, who has so recently escaped from hence; who, in consequence of a fever settling upon his brain at a very early age, was pronounced decidedly insane before he was sixteen—though, you may believe, no pains were spared by his anxious parents to remove so dreadful an infliction. When Italy was overrun by the French republican armies, my sister and her husband sought a refuge in Germany, at a relation of the latter's, but to whose house they could not think of taking their son: as they then had it, however, in contemplation to come to England, they wrote to me, requesting that I would take charge of

of

of the unfortunate youth, till they could so arrange matters as to follow him. I could not deny an only surviving relative so trifling a favour; though I thought it necessary to mention their request to my honoured patron, before I wrote them an answer, as I wished to have their son under my own eyes, as I then hoped and expected they would soon claim him at my hands; and, as I said before, I did not conceive I should be doing either them or him a service, if I suffered him to go to a private mad-house. Mr. Langhton, whose benevolence is unbounded, and who, like the good Samaritan, is always ready to pour oil into the wounds of the afflicted, entered into my feelings upon the occasion; and as I did not wish, at least till my sister's arrival, to have my nephew's unfortunate malady made public, he kindly consented to my having him secured in an apartment over mine, which had been purposely prepared for him; and to avoid exciting the idle curiosity of the servants;

he allowed me to bring him in privately, and put him in possession of the room he has so recently vacated. A faithful old servant of my sister's delivered him into my hands; and I hoped I had guarded against his coming to any harm, having, as I conceived, taken every precaution to prevent his thus rashly endangering his life—not supposing that he would remain more than six months under my care. But the Almighty had otherwise ordained! as my sister died soon after her arrival in Germany, and her husband was, I fear, assassinated by some French emissary, who hoped to be rewarded with his estates. The servant who brought my nephew over, wrote me the melancholy intelligence; and, of course, I was more than ever bound to watch over the poor orphan, whom I began to hope might in time be allowed more liberty, as he certainly has, of late, had lucid intervals, in one of which he must have planned and effected his escape; though maniacs are generally

generally very cunning, and have frequently contrived to outwit their keepers—it is only surprising that the frail cord to which he trusted, did not deceive his expectations.”

“ Providence watched over him, poor soul !” ejaculated Mr. Langhton, who had before been told the story the monk had been relating for the benefit of the company: “ but, pray, how did he contrive to get out upon the roof? I thought we had endeavoured to render that impracticable.”

“ I am positively at a loss to know how he contrived to make a sufficient opening in the iron frame-work, to get his body through. He reached the sky-light by the means of a chair placed upon his table, I presume; and probably, in consequence of his disorder, (which made him set every risk and difficulty at defiance), he had sufficient strength to bend the iron, which I thought secured him. There is a rope, similar to the one fastened to the *chevaux de frize*, now suspended from his window-

frame, by which, I suppose, he raised himself to the height he required; he must then have climbed or scrambled up the inner wall; and he had sense enough to throw his mattress over the spikes, upon which, I suppose, he sat, while fastening the rope by which he descended into the garden—altogether, it is miraculous he did not break his neck.”

“It is, indeed,” resumed Mr. Langhton: “but is it certain that he has been able to scale the garden-walls? I own I think it very probable he may yet be concealed somewhere about the premises: let the gardeners search for him, and let us send some of the servants to make inquiries in the neighbourhood; since, as he is penniless, and unable to make himself understood in English, I dare say he will soon be secured, as it will soon be perceived by those who may meet or overtake him, that he is deranged.”

The Father, who did not seem at all cheered by these prognostics, left the
room

room to search, the garden, attended by Algernon and Belthorpe, who were extremely anxious to see this said maniac; neither of them putting implicit faith in the veracity of the desponding monk, particularly the latter, who strongly suspected that the late prisoner was much nearer related to him than he had chosen to acknowledge, though he thought it possible that he might be mad, and thought the friar could not have hit upon a more economical plan than the one he had adopted for his maintenance.

The Marquis had not chosen, unasked, to give his opinion upon the recent occurrence; and as he did not participate in the monk's fears, nor in the hopes his companions entertained of finding the fugitive in the garden, he readily acceded to Lady William's intreaty that he would finish his breakfast, instead of accompanying the Father in search of his nephew.

Mr. Langhton remained buried in thought during the monk's absence, who

returned, after having searched in every corner of the garden, he said, without discovering any traces of his poor nephew; adding—"Anxious as I am to ascertain whither he is gone, and to have him properly secured, I think there is no need to create any bustle in the neighbourhood," looking at the Marquis, as if he wished to hear his opinion upon the subject.

"It would certainly be more desirable, could he be secured privately," replied our hero; "as it would save Mr. Langhton and you a vast deal of trouble, and some expence; since the existing laws of Great Britain, as you doubtless already know, do not admit of a person being confined, as this gentleman has been, except such a step had been sanctioned by a physician of eminence, and he had been publicly declared a lunatic, and treated as such. Now his having so dextrously managed to release himself, may, in law, perhaps, be deemed a proof of sanity. I know

know maniacs are very cunning, and that they are always very anxious to make their escape from their keepers; but they seldom make ropes, or take any precautions to secure their necks; since many, to my certain knowledge, have jumped out of an upper window; and a lady, very lately, leaped from the roof of the mad-house where she was confined into the court below, and was, in consequence, dashed to pieces; but your nephew appears to have consulted his own safety, even in making his escape. However, he may have taken the opportunity of one of his lucid intervals, to plan his evasion; and should his malady have returned upon him, he may, as others have done before him, run till he drops, or expire of cold and hunger in some lone spot, if he does not, which has not unfrequently happened, throw himself into the first pond or river he meets with; it would, therefore, be very desirable that he should be secured."

As he expected, the Marquis fully suc-

ceeded in alarming, not only the friar, but Mr. Langhton: as they neither of them made any reply to his suggestions, he carelessly inquired, how old the fugitive was?

“I may not be very correct in my dates,” said the agitated monk; “but, I think, about seven-and-twenty—would to Heaven he had never come to England!”

“Why, as matters have turned out, it might have been as well had he remained in Italy, Father,” rejoined the Marquis: “though allow me to observe, that I must think you were to blame, in not placing him under the care of some of the very skilful men in such disorders, with which London abounds; since you do not seem to have given him a chance of recovering his reason, as close confinement must have been as irksome to his spirits, as injurious to his general health. Indeed, had I been in Mr. Langhton’s place, I should long since have insisted upon your nephew’s being either removed from hence, or attended

tended by some of the first medical men in this country; since the sort of mystery that has been made of his residence here, has neither been prudent nor judicious."

Mr. Langhton appeared convinced of the truth of this assertion, as he sighed deeply, while the friar held down his head in evident confusion. Lady William enjoyed the spirited rebuke the Marquis gave the monk; so did Belthorpe, and Algernon unconsciously rubbed his hands in high glee. Mr. Langhton, feeling himself called upon to say something in his own vindication, at last faltered out—"I have certainly been very much to blame, Marquis; I ought—"

"The blame all rests with me," cried the friar; "you were wholly guided by my advice."

"I am as ready to exculpate Mr. Langhton from having intentionally acted wrong as you can be, Father," resumed the Marquis; "still, as he must be more *au fait* of the laws of Great Britain than you seem

to be, he ought not, in a case like this, to have listened to your advice; since, should any unpleasant circumstances occur, in consequence of your prisoner having escaped, the blame will equally fall upon him."

"Your Lordship does not do justice to my feelings," cried the more and more perplexed Italian. "I never meant to render my nephew a prisoner; though, I dare say, should he be secured, he will accuse me of having done so, when, Heaven knows, I was only actuated by my sincere regard for him—though I now perceive I have been to blame. But may I request a few minutes private conversation with you, Mr. Langhton? for my mind is in too confused a state, to allow me to come to any determination how to proceed in this unpleasant business."

The old gentleman, though evidently more displeased with the Father than he even dared to avow, left the room with him, to listen to his justification, our hero

supposed, who was well convinced that all the monk had said respecting Juliano was absolute fiction, since he was certain he was not insane; nor did he, like Belthorpe, think he was at all related to the Father.

The moment the door was shut upon the old man, Algernon, with a sagacious shrug, exclaimed—"Well, 'tis a true saying that murder will out, sooner or later: you and I, Belthorpe, have long suspected that there was some one concealed in the observatory."

"Various circumstances certainly led to our forming such a conjecture, Sir: I am sorry we were not mistaken, since, as matters have turned out, I grieve the Father ever undertook the care of his nephew, or rather, that he chose to confine him within these precincts; since, were there to be any bustle, in consequence of his having made his escape, it would be extremely disagreeable to a man of Mr. Langhton's retired habits of life, and very unpleasant to your Ladyship."

"As

“As I cannot doubt the Father’s veracity,” replied her Ladyship, “I hope, should the poor young fellow be overtaken, all may yet be well: therefore, surely no time ought to be lost in endeavouring to trace the route he may have followed.”

“The Father seems more anxious to exculpate himself than to seek the poor fugitive,” said our hero, “who may, perhaps, return, or be brought home when least expected. It is well, however, he has to do with Mr. Langhton, instead of me, as I should, for my own security, require him to accompany me to the nearest magistrate’s, before whom I should insist upon his relating the story he has so recently told respecting his nephew; and I should then oblige him to swear to the facts he had stated.”

“Oh Lord! Oh Lord! I can but think, what a quandary poor old Domine would be in, if you had your way, brother,” cried the highly-diverted Algernon; “ecod!
you

you would not leave him a loop-hole to creep out of."

Lady William with difficulty composed her countenance; while Belthorpe thought Mr. Langhton ought to be told that it might be necessary the Father should make the required declaration; feeling well assured that the monk would refuse to assert upon oath the petty romance he had amused them with.

In a very short time, the old men returned. Mr. Langhton having sense enough to know that the Marquis had merely stated facts, when he had said he and the friar had acted contrary to law; and he did not wish him to suppose that he was to be persuaded to persevere in acting wrong, out of regard to his confessor's feelings, who had certainly fallen very much in his opinion within the last hour; he had, in consequence, insisted upon immediate inquiries being set on foot in the village and neighbourhood, which he now told the Marquis, adding—"I think this may
be

be done without absolutely declaring from whence the poor maniac made his escape, since he, of course, cannot reveal that circumstance."

Our hero agreed to the justice of the remark, and saw no reason for setting the village gossips a-prating. The friar thought it would be very absurd, since the lower classes of English were extremely prone to scandal; nor did he see the necessity of stating that the fugitive was insane, except he had been guilty of any outrageous action.

Mr. Langhton appeared to acquiesce in this opinion, desiring the Father to describe the dress and figure of his nephew, as they could not else make any inquiry (at least with any hope of success) respecting him. As to his being a foreigner, that need not be mentioned, in the first instance: appealing to the Marquis for his opinion respecting the mode they proposed to pursue. He again said, the less bustle they made the better, situated as
they

they were with respect to the fugitive; offering, as he meant to take a ride, to make inquiries respecting him upon the Manchester road; advising Belthorpe and his brother to take the other great roads; the servants might beat about the neighbourhood; and by this means, they should certainly, some of them, either come up with or hear of such a wanderer.

“ Oh, I am convinced he will be forthcoming, sooner or later,” said the friar, in evident perturbation; “ since he cannot make himself understood, except by signs. What is it, therefore, likely will be done with him, my Lord Marquis, should he, as it appears very probable, apply to any one for relief?”

“ Except he happens to stumble upon some very charitable well-disposed person, Father, he will probably be taken to the churchwardens or overseers of the parish in which he may be found; they will, of course, carry him before a magistrate, who will oblige him, by means of an interpreter,

ter, to give some account of himself. Should he be seized during one of his lucid intervals, you must know, Father, what he is likely to assert in his own defence; probably he will inform the justice from whence he came."

"He does not know where he was confined, Marquis—I took care of that."

"You may have acted very prudently, my good Sir; still I think it extremely probable that he will either be able to lead the way back to his prison, or that, admitting him to be rather reasonable, he will give such a description of this house, as will perfectly satisfy the justice: should he, on the contrary, rave, and rant, and talk incoherently, he will be taken care of till he is owned. It is, therefore, to be wished that some of us may be able to secure him, since you would find yourself in a very disagreeable predicament, Father, if publickly called upon to account for your having secretly confined so near a relation."

"Would

“ Would to God he had remained in Italy !” fervently ejaculated the monk, who rather reluctantly proceeded to describe his figure and dress, but by no means sufficiently accurately to have answered the desired purpose. This the Marquis was alone aware of; he was therefore convinced, that the old hypocrite trusted to Juliano’s supposed ignorance, and to his not being, as he represented him, deranged, for his security; since he flattered himself, that he would undergo any privations, and endure every species of want, rather than give such an account of himself as might lead to his being brought back to the Priory.

It was, however, settled, that our hero, Algernon, and Belthorpe, should, as had been proposed, take three different roads; the Marquis that leading to Manchester, while Ashton, who was to caution all the other servants not to mention the morning occurrences without the walls, was to proceed into the village, where, without making any direct inquiries, he would cer-
tainly

tainly learn whether such a person had been seen; the Father said he would go to Hilton, whither it was possible he might have strolled; and our hero said Donald, upon whose secrecy he knew they might safely rely, should ride to Preston—he should want his boots, and it was as likely the poor fellow had taken that road as any other.

Between ten and eleven, therefore, they all left home, Algernon and Belthorpe in the evident hope of overtaking the supposed maniac: not so the Marquis and Donald, who neither of them troubled any one with inquiries respecting a person they hoped was many miles on the London road; and we presume our readers will guess, that no one else obtained any tidings of the fugitive.

When the family met at dinner, Mr. Langhton, who began seriously to dread that some misfortune had befallen the late captive, declared that he feared he had (as the Marquis had suggested in the morning)

ing)

ing) drowned himself, in which case he might not be found for nine days or more.

The monk's countenance brightened for a moment; but as he well knew that the fugitive was not insane, he dared not hope he had made away with himself; yet he affected to think it very probable something had befallen him; repeatedly declaring he should never forgive himself, were it to be proved that he had come to an untimely end; when in fact he would have readily given the half of his savings to any one who could have assured him that his late prisoner was no more. He might be starved, to be sure; but the English were naturally charitable, and if he could but make himself understood, he might obtain some relief.

While he was making these reflections, the Marquis, who felt by no means satisfied, asked him his nephew's name?

“Juliano Corsini, my Lord.”

“His father was a Tuscan noble, I think
you

you said : was he attached to the court of the Grand Duke ?”

“ By no means ; he chiefly resided at a castle he had in the neighbourhood of Sienna.”

“ The Earl of Algernon made some stay at Sienna, when he was making the grand tour, he told me ; very probably he was acquainted with the Corsini family.”

“ ’Tis possible, my Lord—though they lived very retired. But may I request you would not mention the recent occurrences at Highwood ? we are Catholics, and, as such, likely to be infinitely more blamed, for what no human foresight could have prevented.”

Mr. Langhton seconded the friar’s request. The Marquis assured them both ; that he should be extremely sorry to expose them to censure ; though he did not conceive their being Catholics would either extenuate or aggravate their error in judgment, in the eyes of sensible people. Lady
William

William wished it had sooner been known that there had been such an inmate at the Priory, and that the poor young man had had proper advice. Belthorpe, in more gentle terms, spoke to the same effect. Algernon also seized the opportunity to give the crest-fallen monk a slice, who with difficulty kept his temper, particularly with Belthorpe and his pupil. The Marquis he dared not contradict; besides he felt that he had reason on his side; he had, besides, a very high opinion of his principles—therefore from him he could bear a rebuke; but he could not so easily digest Belthorpe's malicious insinuations, and still less, Algernon's rude hints and implied doubts, (which he had very grossly expressed), respecting the sex of his nephew. The usual summons to vespers alone prevented him from resenting their interference; and he resolved, Italian-like, to be revenged, when they least expected to fall under his displeasure

CHAP. XIII.

THE Marquis and Lady William being left *tête-à-tête*, she, of course, dwelled upon the strange occurrences of the morning, declaring her astonishment at the fugitive's neither having been seen nor heard of in the environs; seriously asking our hero, whether Mr. Langhton would have any thing to dread, admitting a magistrate were to take cognizance of the business?

Malcolm assured her, that as the friar alone was to blame, Mr. Langhton could only be censured, for having, perhaps, been too credulous. As for the Father, he would certainly be required to give a rather clearer
account

account of his nephew, supposing (as he doubtless would be) he was forthcoming; than he had done hitherto; since he did not scruple to acknowledge, that he, for one, put no faith in the vague improbable tale he had told:

“ Nor I, upon my honour, Marquis! I have long suspected there was a strange mystery attached to the turret he inhabits, and I was fearful, as has proved the fact, that my father was privy to it; though I am convinced he implicitly believes whatever his confessor chuses to assert—such are the fruits of a life of seclusion! Mr. Langhton has lived out of the world, till he has become unconscious that he was violating the laws of his country, when, in his opinion, he was displaying his humanity. However, I hope your spirited remonstrances, Marquis, have rather opened his eyes, and that he will never again suffer himself to be duped into acting wrong, even by the Padre, whose absolute want of affection for the poor wanderer, has
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heightened the dislike I have long felt, but never before avowed that I bore him — But I had no patience to hear him descanting upon his fine feelings towards his late captive, when it was easy to perceive that he would have been extremely rejoiced, had he broken his neck in endeavouring to escape from his tyranny. Who can this poor youth be, if not, as he declares, his nephew?"

"That time alone can determine," replied our hero: "not the father's nephew, I would venture to affirm; nor do I think he was insane."

"The Father would be much more at his ease if he were. However, I hope, my dear Marquis, that should Mr. Langhton be involved in any difficulties, in consequence of his infatuation, with respect to his confessor, that you will stand his friend; for I am fearful he will be generally condemned, should his credulity be ever made public."

"I will ever stand forward in his defence,

fence, since I am convinced he merely erred through ignorance; but, for the present, I think we had better let the matter rest. The monk must be miserable while he remains in suspense; and if his captive has any former friends, he may never know whither he is gone; or he may, when he least expects it, be called upon to declare who he really is; and in an English court of justice, he must beware of perjuring himself."

Lady William was prevented from replying, by the return of the party from chapel. The Father did not come in to supper; and, at an early hour, as Mr. Langhton was not in spirits, they retired for the night, when Donald amused his lord with repeating what had passed among the servants, respecting the fugitive, who certainly gave their tongues full liberty within the walls, as they were debarred from relating the wonderful event to their friends; and certainly, one and all, they entertained a most shocking opinion of

the old Italian, and of his confidential Francisco; nor had they spared Mr. Langhton, who, they made no doubt, would connive at any evil doings of the monks, to obtain absolution for his own misdeeds.

The Marquis desired Donald not to drop a hint respecting the fugitive to any soul, except his brother, as he was resolved to make the old Italian declare, not only who Juliano was, but why he had kept him so long confined; briefly recapitulating the story he had told respecting him, which Donald pronounced to be a fiction from beginning to end. He then retired, rejoicing at having so completely outwitted the old hypocrite.

The next morning, being Sunday, the family did not go to mass at seven; and as our hero always dressed for the day when he rose, as he always made a point of going to church wherever he was, he was completing his toilette, when Algernon rapped at his door, crying—"Tis only me, brother."

"Pray

“ Pray walk in,” said the Marquis.

He did not require any further invitation.—“ Well, how are you this morning? I dare say you slept a d-v-l-h deal better than Domini—talking of him, I am sure I shall make you laugh—but one has no opportunity of speaking a word below.”

Donald, who never forgot himself, upon the strength of being honoured with his lord's confidence, instantly retired; when Algernon having given way to a violent burst of laughter, exclaimed—“ Oh, what would I have given you had been at my elbow last night, Marquis! Oh, Belthorpe and I had such fun! I am sure I laughed till my sides were as sore as the Father's back is this morning, I should suppose; for, would you believe it! he gave himself the discipline in good earnest—we saw him, through our peep-hole, lashing away at such a rate, I thought I should have expired with laughing—calling out, between whiles, upon every saint in the calendar,

and promising to pray to them all in turn, if they would but stand his friend in the present emergency."

"You were equally devout not long since, I recollect," said the Marquis.

"Aye, I know I acted like a fool—Belthorpe told me so, and my cousin quizzed me charmingly—but, hang me ! if I would have flogged myself to please any one. However, I do think this business will prove the death of old Domine ; for grandfather is very angry—you touched him up nicely, as Belthorpe says—you put the old gentleman upon his mettle. The Padre has ruled the roast long enough—every one in their turn ; I only wish he was sent after his mad nephew—though I dare say we do not know the rights of that story yet."

"You must be the best judge ; but if we do not go down, we shall keep breakfast waiting."

"True : how sorry I am you are going
to-

to-morrow ! However, we shall meet again in London ; and then I will see a little of life, or I will know the reason why."

The Marquis made no doubt of his acting very absurdly, but did not feel inclined to tell him so ; he therefore walked down stairs, and Algernon was obliged to follow him. The rest of the family were in the oriel parlour. The Father looked extremely melancholy, and seemed very unwell. Mr. Langhton, who was seriously angry with him, and not very well pleased with himself, was peevish, and disinclined to talk, though very polite to his guest, who sincerely rejoiced that he was upon the eve of his departure, as he was convinced that he should not make any farther discoveries respecting his *protégée* ; since he was now convinced that he must have recourse to the law, to oblige the old sinner to reveal who he really was, and why he had kept him so close confined ; and it would require both time and reflection to determine upon the proper mode of attacking

the old hypocrite, as he was resolved to spare Mr. Langhton. Julian, who must prefer his complaint to the Chancellor, he supposed, might presume the owner of the Priory was ignorant of his being detained there. This would be a nice point to manage; yet he flattered himself that the monk might be exposed, without any blame attaching to his patron, since he would not be the only man who had been the dupe of a sanctified hypocrite.

Little passed during breakfast, but when the servants were withdrawn, Mr. Langhton told our hero, that, upon mature deliberation, he had resolved not to take any farther steps to discover the retreat of the unfortunate fugitive, since he greatly feared it would prove of no avail, and it might render public what he acknowledged he earnestly wished to conceal. In that case, the Marquis replied, he would do right not to make any farther stir in the business.

Lady William sighed, but did not speak,
and

and the Padre groaned internally. The bell for chapel seemed to rouse them all; and our hero, wishing them a good morning, sallied forth, meaning to go to the parish church, as he had done the Sunday before.

Dr. Murray, who had rather expected to see him there, was upon the look-out for him, and having joined him at his own gate, walked with him to the church, the ladies bringing up the rear; and notwithstanding Charlotte Melbourne had pronounced our hero a mere Goth, she had taken unusual pains to appear to advantage, since, unfashionable as she thought him, she had no objection to becoming a marchioness through his means. He was, besides, extremely handsome, and appeared very good-tempered, and she might in time model him to her mind.

Miss Murray, who had seen much to admire, and nothing to condemn, in his manners and appearance, the preceding Sunday, was still more prepossessed in his

favour now, owing to the unaffected charity he had displayed towards one of her father's pensioners; though she did not, like her cousin, presume to hope she should ever bear his name.

The Doctor had laid out the ten pounds our hero had given him, in necessaries for the poor labourer's family, telling them to whom they were so greatly obliged; and they were all assembled in the church-yard, to bow and curtsey to their youthful benefactor, which they did with great humility, and apparent heartfelt gratitude, as he passed them; and he completely won the warm hearts of every surrounding villager, by kindly telling the poor woman he was glad to see her look so much better, and by noticing the curly-pated urchin who had induced him to visit the cottage; resolving to pay them another visit before he left Lancashire, and to do something for the child who had first attracted his notice.

Having followed the ladies into the
Rector's

Rector's pew, he again heard an excellent sermon, and returned to the Priory, more prepossessed than ever in favour of the good Doctor; of whom, as well as of the ladies, he took a very polite leave, informing them that he should remove to Highwood the next day; but assured them that he should not leave Lancashire without first calling at the Rectory.

The Doctor was extremely flattered to find himself thus kindly noticed by a man so very much his superior, and who could be only actuated by his regard for him, in thus seeking his acquaintance; as he was well aware that he was not likely to increase his niece's vanity, by declaring himself her admirer; as he perceived, having purposely watched his countenance, that her laboured toilette had been totally thrown away upon him, since he had chiefly directed his discourse and attention to his wife and daughter.

The French ladies, as usual, dined at the Priory, and appeared to participate in the

feelings of Mr. Langhton and the Padre, particularly Madame, whom our hero perceived was by no means at her ease.—“Can she be concerned in the mystery which hangs over my poor *protégée*?” thought he. Then again he reflected that Belthorpe, not the Father, was her confessor, and he was certainly not in the monk’s secrets; therefore, he presumed she was merely acting a studied part; and he gave her credit for being an excellent actress, since not a door opened, without her appearing to participate in the Padre’s visible uneasiness.

The day, therefore, went off very heavily. Lady William and her children did not go to vespers in the evening, as it was the last our hero was to spend at the Priory; and Mr. Langhton was more anxious than ever to conciliate his regard, as to him alone he looked up for protection, in case he should be obliged to appear before any magistrate, in consequence of Julian having made his escape.

“Well !

“ Well! I am sure,” said Algernon, when his grandfather, and the Padre had left the room, “ Father Benedetto has fried in his skin most gloriously to-day: even while saying mass, he started several times, fancying, I dare say, that he heard a thundering rap at the portal, and that his nephew was brought back; and when you rang the house-bell, brother, he seemed almost at his last gasp; nay, he has infected Madame with his fears, for she has been upon the fidget all day. Well, surely we shall find out at last what is become of the poor lunatic.”

“ Most probably,” resumed the Marquis, of whom Lady William inquired whether any thing respecting the poor youth appeared to have transpired in the village?

“ No one seemed to be at all aware of the circumstance,” he replied: “ his servants would certainly have heard them, had any reports been in circulation, or had any stranger been seen in the vicinity. But as this is a business which merely
concerns

concerns the Padre," he went on, "and as he alone will be implicated, should any thing unpleasant occur, let me request your Ladyship will endeavour to banish the circumstance from your mind, since I would almost venture to assert the fugitive has not come to any untimely end—that must have transpired ere this; therefore I feel inclined to rejoice at his having secured his emancipation."

"So should I, believe me, Marquis, were I convinced he was safe, and not likely to perish with cold or hunger."

"I am inclined to hope he is in no danger of doing either," rejoined our hero, "as I suspect he planned and managed his escape during a lucid interval, in which case he may have provided against every evil; so many hours have now elapsed since his departure, that I think he did not set off wholly unprepared to brave the dangers he must apprehend he might encounter."

"God send you may prove a true prophet,

phet, Marquis! at all events, you have raised my spirits, and I will endeavour, as you advise, to think no more of this distressing affair."

Algernon thought no one but the friar need to fret about the matter, since he alone would have to answer for his death, if any misfortune had befallen him.

"Then let us change the subject," said the Marquis, reverting to the following day; and before supper, he succeeded in rendering Lady William extremely cheerful; and as Mr. Langhton's fears subsided, he became less gloomy and abstracted, and met the family at breakfast the next morning, in very tolerable spirits.

The Marquis proposed the ladies should accompany him in his post-chaise, to which they very readily assented.

"Then Belthorpe and I had better set out first," said Algernon, "else we shall be too late for dinner—for our coach was not bought yesterday, and our old horses never go out of a jog-trot."

Mr. Langhton did not approve of these impertinent remarks, and the friar called the young man to order, in no very dulcet tone; while the master of the house hoped the Marquis would frequently look in upon them, while he remained in Lancashire, adding—"Should you, during your residence at Highwood, hear any thing respecting the unfortunate fugitive, may I request that you will take proper measures to have him secured and placed in proper hands? and should we obtain any intelligence respecting him, will you allow me to trouble you to become my agent upon the occasion? You will know how to act infinitely better than I shall; and I care not what money it costs me, so long as I am but spared the shame of coming forward to defend my own conduct."

"You never shall be reduced to so disagreeable a necessity, if you will allow me *carte blanche*, Sir. The Father will, doubtless, whenever called upon, not refuse to
answer,

answer, upon oath, any questions respecting his nephew, which a magistrate may think proper to ask. The servant who brought him over may easily be forthcoming; if not, there are many Italians in England, from Florence and Sienna, who must have heard of the Corsini family, and probably that their son laboured under a mental derangement: that fact once ascertained beyond a doubt, will fully exonerate the Padre from any charges which his nephew may, during his lucid intervals, bring against him."

The monk was visibly uneasy during our hero's speech; but he was too cautious to drop a hint likely to lead to the elucidation of the mystery the Marquis wished to fathom, as he contented himself with assenting, in general terms, to every thing he advanced; and Mr. Langhton was profuse in his thanks to his Lordship, assuring him that he would sanction and confirm any thing he might either say or do, respecting

pecting the unpleasant business in question.

He then reverted to Algernon's proposed journey to London, hoping that the Marquis would be so obliging as to countenance him when there, though he did not wish him to mix much in the high world, but merely to visit among his relations; and if it was absolutely needful, why he should not object to his being presented at court, though he feared he would not appear to much advantage there.

The Father thought the Earl and Marquis would be the best judges of what he ought, or ought not to do, since he (Mr. Langhton) had lived too long out of the world to give his advice upon the occasion. The old gentleman felt the monk's implied sarcasm, and it by no means helped to conciliate matters between them.

At last, however, the party set out for Highwood, leaving Mr. Langhton and his confessor *tête-à-tête*, though never less disposed

posed to enjoy each other's company. Donald followed his lord on horseback, having received the thanks and blessings of all the household, in return for the liberal donation he had made them, by his master's orders.

After a very pleasant ride, the Marquis, Lady William, and her daughter, drove into the court-yard, in front of Lady Winifred's mansion; Algernon and Belthorpe following in the Langhton rumble, as the former styled the family coach.

The servant in waiting led the way into the grand saloon, where Lady Winifred gave her guests the meeting; and having welcomed Lady William and her daughter to Highwood in very flattering terms, she turned to our hero, congratulating herself upon now having him for an inmate; and finally addressed Algernon and his tutor in very appropriate terms. She next introduced her ward to the whole party; yet, though the young lady was adorned for conquest, our hero, like his grandfather,

saw

saw very little to admire in her, as her staring, or, as Lady Winifred would have said, piercing black eyes, rendered her sallow complexion and high cheek-bones more apparent; nor were her stiff jetty locks any embellishment to her countenance; and her figure was certainly not cast in the mould of the Graces, as she was short, rather stout, and very high-shouldered. He was, however, extremely polite to the young lady, as was Lady William and her daughter; and Algernon endeavoured to follow their lead, though he was extremely deficient in many of the common forms of good breeding, and wanted a great deal of polishing, to render him fit to appear in the first circles.

Not so his sister, who had lived equally retired, as well as her mother, but they both looked the gentlewomen; and the former always dressed very fashionably, though very simply; her Ladyship having long employed one of the first dress-makers in Manchester, as she was resolved
that

that her daughter should never appear singular, nor in the fashionable costume of her younger days, to which Lady Winifred still strictly adhered.

Little of moment passed till dinner was announced, which rejoiced Algernon, who did not approve of such late hours, though her Ladyship never dined later than four; but he had not taken a luncheon, therefore he was extremely hungry; and as every delicacy in season smoked upon the board, he made himself ample amends for having waited so much beyond his usual time, quaffing down repeated draughts of ale, which he affirmed was excellent, and appearing to consider himself perfectly at home.

Lady Winifred was surprised to see an Albany such a glutton, consoling herself with the reflection that he took more after the Langhtons; still he by no means resembled his mother, much less his sister; indeed, she felt angry at such an Orson's being able to claim a relationship to them,
and

and the Marquis of Endermay, whom she thought—

“ Was complete in feature and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman ;”

and to whom she paid the utmost attention, as well as to Lady William and the lovely Rosalie, whom she perforce acknowledged was infinitely handsomer than her ward; but still she hoped that Miss Albany's superior fortune would at least purchase her a titled husband, as she could not flatter herself that she would ever shine as Marchioness of Endermay, his Lordship having certainly not appeared very much struck with her charms.

Belthorpe, who was to the full as fond of good eating and drinking as his pupil, had, however, the sense not to give way to his appetite upon this occasion; and he certainly endeavoured to keep Algernon within bounds, but he was deaf to all his hints, and regardless of his looks; and after the ladies had retired, he
would

would have made as free with the bottle as he had done at Preston, if the Marquis had not reminded him of having done so, hinting, that it would be necessary he should be sober when he joined the party in the saloon, which the Marquis soon proposed doing.

Lady Winifred, wishing to shew off her ward, desired her to sit down to the piano; and as she was a very tolerable performer, she met with her full share of applause; when the Marquis, no less anxious to exhibit the accomplishments of his sister, requested her to favour them with a song; and though certainly not a scientific singer, she had so fine a voice, and so good an ear, that she delighted all her auditors, who were astonished when they learnt that her mother had been her principal instructress, assisted by Belthorpe, who readily gave them a specimen of his skill, and he was certainly no despicable musician.

The afternoon, therefore, passed off very pleasantly; and after tea, Lady Winifred
reverted

reverted to her intended London journey, saying, she proposed leaving home in March, and returning home early in May, if the weather set in warm, else she might remain in town till after the birth-day. Algernon, who knew his movements would be regulated by her's, wished she had resolved to set off in January, as Lord Dunluce had wondered how anybody could vegetate in the country after the winter birth-day; it was very proper to leave town for a fortnight at Easter, he agreed.

“Because it is the fashion,” replied the Earl, “and you would like to regulate your movements by that standard, and to divide your time between London, Brighton, and Weymouth.”

“Oh, I would always spend November and December at Woodville, Sir.”

“You are resolved to convince the company you are the slave of fashion, by which no sensible man would ever regulate his conduct—I appeal to you, Marquis.”

“I am too partial to the country at all seasons,

seasons, my dear uncle, to be able to argue the point with my cousin: possibly, a winter spent in London, and in the fashionable world, may render me less of a Goth than I am at present; but I am fearful I shall never enter into the true spirit of any fashionable water-drinking place, as I am not fond of dancing in warm weather; and as I never play at any game, except for amusement, I am fearful my time would hang very heavy upon my hands, except I went with a very agreeable party, and the adjacent rides and walks were extremely pleasant."

"You will be of a very different opinion this time twelvemonth, Marquis," cried Lord Dunluce. "A winter spent in town, and a summer at Brighton, will make you a convert to my way of thinking; you will never again cross the Tweed before the beginning of November."

The Marquis shook his head, in token of doubt; and Algernon only wished he was as much his own master; fancying that he

should evince more spirit, and cut a greater dash than his brother seemed inclined to do: at all events, he was well convinced that he should prefer residing in London to living at Montrose Castle, which he fancied must, like the Priory, be a very dull place.

At nine o'clock, Mr. Langhton's coach came for his daughter and grandchildren. Lady Winifred hoped she should often see the ladies during the winter, promising to visit them at the Priory very frequently, as she was resolved they should henceforth be very good neighbours. She did not extend her invitation to Algernon; but he presumed he was included in it: and when he got home, he declared that the Priory seemed like a dungeon, when compared to Highwood; telling Belthorpe, when they were alone, that when once he was his own master, he would follow the maxims of his cousin, who seemed a lad of spirit, and not bury himself in the country, as his brother had hitherto done.

“Faith!

“Faith! you would not call it being buried, Mr. Albany, were you to reside at Montrose Castle; and I have heard you say, that a cottage and the girl you loved, was preferable to a palace with a woman you did not: has the great heiress induced you to change your opinion, for you cannot like her?”

“Not I, truly; though, positively, B. the Father has hinted to me, more than once, that it would be a very meritorious action, were I to marry her, on purpose to render her a convert to the true faith; and her money, you know, would enable me to live in style.”

“True; but I would advise you to stick to Pauline, as Lady Winifred will never consent to your marrying her ward, and she will never listen to any but a titled suitor: why, she absolutely looked down upon you—all her smiles were reserved for your brother and cousin; they are peers, and you never will be one. Whereas, Pauline has beauty, wit, and family, to
recommend

recommend her; and I think it very probable she may recover part of her property; if not, you will have enough for both."

Algernon agreed to the truth of this; and as his Jew cousin had certainly scarcely noticed him, and as he really loved Pauline, he swore the Padre was an old fool, and that he might bring about a match between his mad nephew and the heiress, for what he cared, for he would stick to his first flame, whose health he drank in a bumper, and then retired to dream of love and a cottage.

END OF VOL. II.

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